An Enlightening Commentary into

The Holy Qur'an

1

Compiled by:

Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faghih Imani
and
A Group of Muslim Scholars

IMAM ALI Islamic Research Center

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحیم

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In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

INTRODUCTION

Verily this Qur'ān doth guide to that which is most right (or stable) (to run societies), " and giveth the glad tidings to the Believers who work deeds of righteousness, that .(they shall have a magnificent reward " (Sura Al-'Asrā, No. ١٧, verse ٩

We have sent down to thee the book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy, and " .(Glad Tidings to Muslims," (Sura An-Naḥl, No. ١۶, verse ٨٩

When those come to thee who believe in Our Signs, say: ` Peace be on you: Your " Lord hath inscribed for Himself (the rule of) Mercy; verily, if any of you did evil in ignorance, and thereafter repented, and amended (his conduct), Lo! He is Oft-.(Forgiving, Most Merciful ", (Sura Al-An`ām, No. ۶, verse ۵۴

The collection of all the messages or revelations that Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) received is called Qur'ān. The Holy Qur'ān is the ` text-book ' of Islam. All the doctrines, principals, laws, commandments and prohibitions of Islam are enshrined in the Qur'ān. It was through the Qur'ān and Muhammad Mustafa (p.b.u.h.) that the message of Allah (s.w.t.) to mankind was completed, and through the inspired .commentary of Ahlul-Bait, religion was perfected

In this century of research and scientific progression of the computer, endeavours for the conquest of space, the finding of new stars and galaxies of even more than ۵٠ million light years away from us by modern instruments and the efforts of astronomers, and the faster means of communication have set in motion such rapid conveyances of men and material, which were far beyond the imagination of the former generations of the human race and which causes a vital change and

exchange of thoughts and religious ideology, the light of the Qur'ān and

Islam is penetrating all curtains of every kind and is illuminating many individuals' hearts in nearly all parts of the world, inspite of heavy barriers and careful controls and religious interrogation exerted by not

only many governments of non-Muslim nations, but also in some Muslim countries against their believing people, especially during the years after the Islamic Revolution .of Iran

The effective influence of the light of truth together with the speed in the movement of the Age has brought forth a more vital change and exchange of thought and religious ideology in connection with the Holy Qur'ān. In regard to this, we refer to what the Messenger of Allah (p.b.u.h.) has said about it: "...When afflictions surround you like the dark night, refer to the Qur'ān, because, it is an Intercessor whose intercession is accepted. It reports the evils (of people) which will be confirmed. It leads the person to Heaven who puts it in front of himself (follows it); and he who puts it behind himself (neglects it) will be driven to Hell. This very Qur'ān is the best guide to the best ways. It is a Book in which there are useful explanations, statements and .(gaining (of goals). It is the Separator (of right and wrong)...", (Usul-i-Kāfī, vol. ٢, p. ٥٩٩

To recite the Qur'ān, obviously, those people whose language is not Arabic and know English, at first, refer to the Holy Book in English, because this is an international language and it is possible for all nations with any native language, to read and understand it in English. As far as we know, there are more than ٥٠ different English translations of the Qur'ān available in Iran, alone, and, probably some others can be found, besides them, in libraries (and homes) throughout the world. This makes it easy for the lovers of truth to receive the knowledge of the Holy Qur'ān and Islamic ,ideology, through the medium of English

.which formerly was acquired only directly by the Arabic and Persian languages

But, a fact should be mentioned here that although the Qur'ān is, on the whole, an easily understandable book in general, yet, not all of the words of Allah are easily understood by ordinary people and need explanatory commentary, ` Tafsīr '. Alongside this path, there are some problems that those eager to learn the Qur'ānic truth should know and be careful of. Hence, we deal, here, with some of the difficulties we recognized and were involved in when we were preparing this work; the fruit of our humble labour of more than three years, almost a pioneer service of its

,kind, was a translation of the commentary of over one part

Volumes ۱ and ۲, (of the ۳۰ parts) of the Holy Qur'ān from different-

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.commentary sources

The Persian-Arabic original work, compiled by a group of Muslim scholars who preferred their names to be mentioned in the next world instead of this world, is based especially upon popular commentaries mostly accepted by Muslim scholars of both schools of thought, with the consultation of some other books and present living scholars, learned in the Qur'ānic Sciences, as our investigative sources on the path of

producing this translated commentary in a simple standard of English easily understood by laymen. The style of writing, here, is a mixture of British-English and American-English,understandable by all the readers, even for those acquainted with only one of them; but excuse us for using some interchangable spellings. If both are used, from time to time, they are acceptable; i.e.: defenceless and defenseless, or .favour and favor

Not All English Versions of the Qur'ān Are Acceptable

Some of the Western translators of the Holy Qur'ān, not all of them of course, and some of the producers of the literature on Islam in the English language are the anti-Muslim elements which are busy distorting the facts about the faith to create .disruption in the Islamic ideology

These hostile minds have done the worst possible work which is for them to black-list the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) and the religion of Islam, through their harsh, purposeful, and subtle mis-translations, mis-interpretations, mis-representations and distortion of the facts. The distortion and the misinterpretations are so strongly plastered with such attractive colors of their linguistic excellence and the delusive logic that the blind lovers of the English language, who are hardly or even totally

unaware of the actual Qur'ānic factors of faith, get caught in the falsehood tempered with the eloquence and they swallow the `sugar-coated poisonous pills of deceit ' and get themselves duly conditioned to serve the purpose of the publications of the hostile .camps

The current standing of Evil has always been against the Truth in the history of man, of course, or even before the recorded history, from when the sons of Adam (a.s.) .came into existence

When these antagonistic elements have sucessfully extended their

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active influence upon our own religion, ideology and social tradition, we are also bound in our duty to Allah, His Final Word, the Holy Qur'ān, the Faith, and to Islam, to do our best, at least, to present to every sincere seeker of it a selection of the proper translation of the verses of the Holy Qur'ān from among the best translations appropriate to the meaning of the original Arabic text, and the ` Tafsīr ', commentary, .applied in this book

By the way, we believe it is the essential belief of ` Shi`ah ' that the present Qur'ān, which is in our hands today, is the Holy Book of Allah, revealed to the holy Prophet Mohammad (p.b.u.h.), as arranged and compiled during his lifetime and was reread to him to assure accuracy and it contains nothing less or more than what was revealed. (And it should be noted that, " Nay, but it is a Glorious Qur'ān, (inscribed

in a tablet preserved." (۸۵: ۲۱,۲۲), whose present arrangement is the order in which the various verses were assorted and arranged at the command of the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.), himself. This is the uncorrupted or undisturbed Word of Allah, the preservation of which has been guaranteed by Allah, Himself where He says: " We have, without doubt, sent down the Message; and We will assuredly guard it (from .(corruption) ", (۱۵: ۹

Furthermore, the English translations next to the Arabic text of the verses, in this book, besides the careful investigation and searching through different lexical and commentary sources together with the consultation of various authentic translations of English versions of the Holy Qur'ān (the names of which are listed at the end of this book under the title of ` References ') contain the most specific possible senses in Arabic and English languages. These have been considered and applied to produce the closest meaning to the Word of Allah and the commentary. The translator did his best to preserve this Divine Message and, in conveying the Qur'ānic facts in English, there has been some divine assistance bestowed (by Allah) through seeking help from the Messenger of Allah, the holy Prophet of Islam (p.b.u.h.), who brought this Message .to light

The translator of the current commentary, this writer, believes that the Word of Allah,

the Holy Qur'ān, which is one of the two weights ` Thaqalayn ', is too magnificent for him to translate, because of

the fear of Allah, and he needed a kind of permission from Him to change the original text from Arabic into another language which, somehow, was finally granted to him by the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) : " Verily this is a revelation from the Lord of the Worlds ", " In the perspicuous Arabic tongue ", (۲۶: ۱۹۲ and ۱۹۵).

What is a ` Commentary ' ?

A pure, correct, accurate translation of the Qur'ān is necessary,

but it is not sometimes enough for the readers of it to understand all of the apparent and hidden meanings that some verses bear, and, it is the duty of every Muslim, man or woman, to read, understand and contemplate on the Holy Qur'ān according to his own capacity: "...read you, therefore, of the Qur'ān as much as may be easy for you...", (۷۳: ۲۰).

This reading has to be done not only with the tongue, voice and eyes; a mere recitation, but with the best light that our intellect can supply, and even more, with the truest and purest light which our heart and conscience can provide us. But, as was mentioned earlier, it is not always possible to understand the Holy Book by itself, fully, as Allah says: " That is indeed a Qur'ān most honourable," " Which none shall touch but those who are purified ", (۵۶: ۷۷,۷۹).

Thus, some additional information is needed. For example, it is sometimes necessary for the understanding of the text to refer to the particular occasion of the revelation of a particular verse; or to know the philological changes of a word used at the time of revelation or before it and the meaning that it has in Arabic, today. Or, the alphabetical symbols which evidently and undoubtedly are secrets, and especially the ambiguous / mutašābihāt /, the knowledge of which has been announced to be with the / rāsixūna fil `ilm /, ` those deeply established in knowledge ', with even the names of the hinted custodians of the knowledge to remain concealed. They are some things that only `the particular ones, the sinless ones ', besides the Prophet (p.b.u.h.), himself, the agency or the sources authorized by Allah and the Holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) viz, Ahlul-Bait who were connected to the knowledge of Allah, (as He says: " And whom We had taught knowledge from Our own Presence " (۱۸: ۶۵),) knew about

all the Qur'ānic facts and talked

.about them in their traditions and narrations

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For instance, the Apostle, himself, answered the questions which used to be asked by people as to the meaning of certain words in the verses revealed, or details of certain historical or spiritual matters on which they sought more enlightenment. These answers and explanations, or, in other words, the commentaries were gathered by some Companions / aṣḥāb / and were afterwards written down which are called ` Ḥadīth ' or ` traditions '. Of course, the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) had openly declared in Hadīth-uth-Thaqalayn that the Qur'ān is with the Ahlul-Bait, and to avoid going astray, the Muslims should be attached to these two. Later, Ahlul-Bait's explanations and narrations, concerned with the matter, were added to them and, together with the effect of expert religious scholars in the past and present, brought up ` Exegesis ' (explanation of the Qur'ān) which became a science in itself and was called ` Tafsīr ', .commentary

Commentary ' shows how a group of verses or a particular verse was revealed to ` the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) for a particular occasion

which also has a general meaning. The particular occasion and the particular people concerned have passed away, but the general meaning and its application remain true for all time, to enlighten the world, thoroughly. This is also one of the miracles of this Divine Book that, with the help of ` commentary ', the Qur'ān is always open and it .is always new for those new generations to come

The Current Commentary

As was mentioned earlier, the light of Islam is enlightening the corners everywhere in the world and seekers of truth, having referred to the translations of the Holy Qur'ān, ,' find that they need ` Tafsīr

.commentary

Some of them, the Shi`ah believers in particular, have been led to this Center, Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (a.s.) Library, which received many letters requesting a clear, concise .' English Tafsīr, ` a commentary of the Holy Qur'ān

From the beginning of Islam until today (although many times the Holy Qur'ān has been translated into English and a few of them are published with brief, detailed commentary, as footnotes), there has rarely been, as far as we know, a fairly complete commentary in English

sufficient for seekers of truth to find their answers. So, the decision was made to .supply this commentary

Ayatullah `Allamah Mujāhid Al-Hāj Sayyid Kamāl Faghīh Imānī, the founder and responsible party of this Islamic Scientific Research Center, approached and reported the need for the commentary in English to the concerning scholars and appropriate research societies. Then, ١٢ people, who had varying nationalities and educational backgrounds, especially from the point of English language and Islamic Theology, gathered. In their first gathering which was held on ٢٨th Safar, ١۴١٢ (١٣٧٠ H. and ١٩٩١), they concluded that the commentary of the whole Qur'ān which they intended to .supply in English, would take many years of time for the translators to produce

In order to quench the thirst of the lovers of Truth who had demanded it again and again, they decided to supply the translation of the commentary of the last section of the Qur'ān as a sample and after its publication and receiving the constructive comments of the readers, then, with better skillfulness, this writer (or writers), would continue the translation of the commentary from the beginning of the Holy Qur'ān to .provide a complete one

Therefore, they thought it would be better that the sample, entitled ` An Enlightening Commentary into the Light of the Holy Qur'ān ', begin with Sura Insān, the end of the ٢٩th Section, because the Qur'ān was revealed for the improvement of Man and this Sura is about Man and his creation from a lowly life-germ which can develop unto the .highest points where no other creature can ascend

But at the time of initiation, viz. when the translation of the commentary of the Qur'ān actually began, the number of the involved people dwindled down to two, the translator and the editor, who continued the endeavour until the English translation of the commentary of the thirtieth part of the Qur'ān was finished and then offered it to .the truth seekers of the world in two volumes

Thanks to Allah, the Gracious, in addition to the extraordinary abundant appreciations an encouragements of the dear readers of these books from different parts of the world in their thousands of letters, the first and the second volumes of this

commentary not only were elected nationally as the best translated books in Iran (۱۹۹۵ AD,

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AH. and again in ۱۹۹۶ AD, ۱۴۱۷ / ۱۳۷۵ AH.) but, according to some eye ۱۳۷۴/ ۱۴۱۶ witnesses and many letters from various universities and scientific religious centers in the world, they have also been considered, up to now, the newest, most unique outstanding pioneer works of their kind and are used as authentic reference books of Islamic theology based on the view points of Ahlul-Bait (a.s.). Furthermore, they have been selected to be taught as English text books in some universities and religious schools in different Eastern and Westerm countries, even in England. Therefore, we ought to be very thankful to Allah Who let the Light of His Word spread so brightly and effectively thereby. All of these favours, of course, were the best spiritual worldly reward for this mortal and a form of encouragement to begin the endeavour from the beginning of the Qur'ān as was previously designed and decided. By the help of Allah (s.w.t.), he, as a translator, finished the translation of the current volume by himself, as he did the former volumes. Also, the investigation of the materials and verification of the conformity of them with their original sources was another achievement for him added to the auspicious task of translation. Yet, he believes and usually murmers .by himself: " And my success (in my task) can only come from Allah

(In Him do I trust, and unto Him do I look." (۱۱:۸۸

There have been, of course, some others such as the scholars, the editor, the library officials, the computer data entry operator and typist, those printing house-personell, etc. who sincerely had a share in the concerning activities until these published books .became ready to be delivered to the dear readers

Hence, we are completely grateful for their efforts and extend our thanks for their attempts as well as to those who financially or mentally and idealistically had any kind .of involvement and cooperation in this work

Attributes Needed for Working on This Kind of Commentary

This endeavour needed not only the knowledge and skillfulness in the English language, but also the knowledge of Arabic, Persian, and Islamic science and culture, because Tafsīr is an attempt to analyze and

,explain the meaning of verses in the Holy Qur'ān. Moreover, Allah

Himself, says: " We have sent down to thee the book explaining all things, a

,Guide, a Mercy, and Glad Tidings to Muslims ", (Sura Al-Naḥl, No. ١۶
.(verse ٨٩

Then, it needs that those involved have sufficient understanding about almost all sciences and knowledge that human beings are concerned with when working with the commentary. Also, besides their structure, the phonetic sound systems of the two languages, English and Arabic, are different. Therefore, when an Arabic word from the Qur'ān is mentioned in the English text, to avoid using ` Arabic Script ' in the book, as far as possible, it is shown with the phonetic alphabet and in its special phonetical ./ / :.sign, i.e

A transliteration table of the Arabic letters and sounds and the corresponding .(phonetic signs, applied in this book, is given at the beginning of the book, (p. ٣١

The Problems in Translating

The translator has tried to avoid mixing up his own personal theories and conclusions with the interpretation of the text, itself, which is usually perfectly perspicuous as it claims to be. With the help of Allah, he did his best; at times asking for guidance from some learned clergymen, and using all the knowledge and experience he possessed in the service of the Holy Qur'ān for translating its commentary, hoping that Allah accepts it. But the nature of this sort of endeavour is so that, in the course of translation, some difficulties arise from various causes. For instance, cultures in the Arabic language and English language are different so that some of the words like / amrun bayn al amrayn / in the case of fatalism and freewill are nearly impossible to be translated into English; or because the concept is not found in English literature, it is sometimes rather difficult with, for example, what /sajdah/ ` prostration ' exactly means in Arabic. In such cases he selected the meaning of the words from among what the earlier commentators and philologists used and, also, where they were not unanimous, he used the ideas of the new writers who had reasonable advantages in their interpretations. Explanations, of course, are always helpful in conveying clear .meanings, which he took benefit from, too

It is noteworthy that there are some circumstances in the text, of the commentary, in which a verse or verses of the Qur'ān from other

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Suras rather than the Sura under discussion are mentioned as evidence or, thereby, for strengthening the idea. The text of these verses and, also, the traditions and narrations from the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) or

Ahlul-Bait (a.s.) are printed in English in bolder type than the running commentary in order to distinguish, at a glance, the substance from the shadow. Also, the mentioned verses are generally and subtly or roughly taken provisionally from A. Yusuf Ali's translation or other translations of the Qur'ān, the list of which is given at the end of the book. These verses should be changed or re-adjusted to those translations done by the writer in this book when the translation of the commentary of the Qur'ān ends.

It Was Only By His Merciful Will

The translator has interesting factual stories to tell of how the way of this endeavour was paved by Providence and how he was divinely led to be absorbed into this task, Alhamd-u-lillah. A few words given here, in this regard, are not to be misunderstood as a display of vanity for any pecular distinction; for there is none.

It is purely to attract the attention of the readers to a living instance of the Providential implementation of the divine plan and how man drifts to his assignment and how matters are automatically manipulated, though, they seem yet only to be circumstantial. " ... Our Lord is He Who gave to each (created) thing its form and nature and further gave (it) guidance." (۲۰:۵۰)

For example, once, on a night, the writer of these lines, the translator, had seen in a dream that the Holy Qur'ān, was placed, honourably, on a high position, wide open, high above a very great crowd of people amongst whom he was standing, watching. The full name of his was clearly written in the midst of the writings on the right page of it with magnificent bold letters.

The dream was obviously a good one, but it did not have any particularly vivid meaning to him at that time.

It was approximately four years before he found out, in the course of translating the

commentary of verses ۱۱-۱۶ from Sura `Abasa, No. ۸۰, both the meaning of that true dream and the cause of later eventual

changes in his career of twenty years, as a manager of a profitable Foreign Language Center, thanks to Allah. It is always true what the Qur'ān says: " You will not unless ,Allah wills, surely Allah is All-Knowing

(All-Wise." (۷۶:۳۰

By His graceful arrangement, this writer was separated from almost all his material gains, of this fleeting world, to be set toward the assured, perfect, pure, spiritual rewards of the next, everlasting world from Him, Allah Willing. When he began translating the commentary of the Qur'ān and entered this great Divine Ocean of Light, he found out that from earlier times such a success had been appointed and bestowed upon him by Allah. Therefore, all changes and graceful arrangements are directly from Him and it was His helpful Will that planned His graceful design and showered the ability and insight upon him to lead him to the present point. He is eagerly in hopes that He will help him and guide him in all cases to complete the task .successfully so that He accepts it from him

Now, Alhamd-u-lillah, that the translation of the commentary of this part of the Qur'ān has been completed and handed to you, the dear reader, you are, in advance, honourably asked to, firstly, forgive whatever mistakes or typographical errs you may find in it, and, secondly, inform them clearly, if any, to the publisher's address, with your evidence or point of view to be utilized and the material be corrected in later .prints

Finally, prayer is offered to Almighty Allah that He may endow the translator with life and strength enough to live to complete the series of this humble effort successfully under His Merciful confirmation and acceptance; and may He allow this book to go .what small distance it can towards our ultimate salvation. Amin

Was-salām

Sayyid Abbas Sadr-`āmelī

Publisher's Note

The swelling, surging revolution of the Iranian Muslim nation has an essentially specific culture which is based on and has flourished because of adherence to the monotheistic school of thought, the Qur'ān, Ahlul-Bait (a.s.) and other Islamic theology. The nation of Iran has revolutionized in order to revive and expand that culture. One of the bases of this goal among the youth and other interested citizens (people) is the establishment of public scientific research centers wherein the means .of study and research of Islamic science and culture are made available

Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali(a.s.) Public Library and Religious Scientific Research Center in Isfahan is one of these centers, which, from its earliest days of establishment, in addition to achieving this aim, has continuously had a share, as far as possible, in the publication of the works of some Shi`ah scholars from Iran as well as others in the world. The subject matter of these useful books were different. It commenced with the publication of an outstanding Islamic work on the subject of Imāmate.This work was comprised of two books containing some chosen materials from ۵۶ separate treatises composed by the leading traditionists of the Sunnite school of thought about Imam Mahdi, Allah's remaining emissary, and offered to the esteemed clerical class and all those interested in science and knowledge. Since then, this institute has published thirty one other valuable religious, scientific research works in Arabic and .Farsi

When these publications were distributed in different parts of the world, as one factor, together with the reflection of the social, cultural and religions revolution of Iran, they introduced this country as the `heart ' of the Islamic world. Therefore, those who love Islam and the Qur'ān and are interested in the school of thought of Ahlul-Bait (a.s.) communicated with this scientific research center from a variety of nationalities, races, and colours all over the world by way of letters, Fax messages, and telephone calls to demand that this beloved message, i.e., the Qur'ān and Islamic theology, which is the ideal of the truth-seekers of the world, be published in their own languages. ` The commentary of the Qur'ān in English ' was included among the demands of many people. Hence, the Founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the

,sage

the grand leader of the revolution, and the master of the affairs of Muslims, the Late Honorable Ayatullah-il-`Uzmā Al-Imam Khomeinī (s.a.), was informed of the immediate circumstance. He responded: "This idea ought to be put to action as soon as possible. The translation of the commentary of the Holy Qur'ān in English, as well as in other possible languages, should be made available to the knowledgable ones and lovers of Islam and the Qur'ān." He even continued by saying: " There is much to ".be done and so little time

Imam Khomeinī (R.) was a man of knowledge, interested in study and research, a learned clergyman, a high ranking philosopher, and a grand unique politician who had attained his nourishment from the pure

.Fountain of Monotheism, the Qur'ān, and Ahlul-Bait's (a.s.) doctrine

He was truly a lover of Islam and the Qur'ān and a genuine follower of Ahlul-Bait's (a.s.) knowledge and teachings. The magnificence of his thought and his sincerity to the Qur'ān and Ahlul-Bait (a.s.) is apparent

in his statements contained in ` the Last Message ' which is his last politico-divine will and testament. In this remaining work of his, after a notable explanation about the well-known holy tradition from the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) who said: " I leave behind me two weighty (very worthy and important) things: the Book of Allah (i.e. the Qur'ān) and my progeny, my Ahlul-Bait. Never, never will these two get separated from each other "... .(until they meet me at the Haud of Kauthar (the Pond of Abundance

:Imam Khomeinī adds

We are honored and our beloved nation, which is totally committed to Islam and " Qur'ān, is honored t hat it wants to liberate the truths of the Qur'ān, which from end-to-end calls for the unity of Muslims and the entire humanity, from graveyards and cemeteries and present it as the greatest prescription for liberation from the chains which are wrapped around the hands, feet, hearts, and minds of human beings and drag them towards non-existence and destruction, slavery and subjugation to the Taqootis. We are honored that we are the followers of a madhab (school of religious

law) whose founder, on Allah's direction, was Allah's prophet and Ameer ul-Mu'meneen 'Ali Ibn Abi Tālib, this servant of Allah who was himself liberated from all chains and was designated, in turn, as the liberator of mankind from all chains of .(slavery (to other than Allah

We are honored that Nahjul Balagha, which after the Qur'ān is

the greatest prescription for spiritual and material life, is the highest book for the liberation of mankind, and its spiritual and political prescriptions are the most valuable .for liberation, is authored by our Ma'soom Imam

We are honored that the Ma'soom Imams from 'Ali Ibn Abi Tālib to the Liberator of mankind (A.S.) who with the power of Allah is alive and supervises all affairs, are our Imams. We are honored that the supplications, which are called the ascending Qur'ān .are from our Ma'soom Imams

We are honored that the intimate prayers of Sha'banieya, the supplications of 'Arafat of Hossein Ibn 'Ali, Saheefa Sajjaddiya (this

Psalms of Āle Mohammad), and Saheefa Fatimah (which is an Allah-inspired book to .Zahrāye Mardieya) are from us

We are honored that Baqir ul 'Ulūm, who is the highest personality of history and no one, other than Allah Ta'ala and the Prophet (S.A.W.A.W.S.) and the Ma'soom Imams, has been or will ever be able to understand his station is from us. And we are honored that our madhab is Ja'afari and that our Fiqh which is an infinite sea (of knowledge) is one of his (Imam Ṣādiq a.s.) contributions. And we are

.proud of all Ma'soom Imams (a.s.) and we are committed to following them

We are honored that our Ma'soom Imams (a.s.) lived in prisons and exile because they tried to raise the status of the Deen of Islam and implement the (teachings) of the Holy Qur'ān, one of whose dimensions is the formation of the Just Government, and finally became martyrs in attempts to irradicate oppressive governments and Taqootis of their own time. Today we are honored that we want to implement the ideals of

the Qur'ān and Sunnah. For the sake of this magnanimous end, our people selflessly .sacrifice their lives, properties, and loved ones in the Way of Allah

We are honored that our women, young and old, big and small, weak and strong, are present and work, side by side or even better than our men, in raising the status of

"... .Islam and achieving the ideals of Islam in cultural, economic, and military fields

p:۲۹

Hence, according to our Islamic religious and social duty, we took action towards the publication of the English version of the commentary of the Qur'ān. After three years of effort and endeavour on the part of all who were involved in the completing of this work, the first print of the first and second volumes of this commentary consisting of the thirtieth part (Juz') of the Holy Qur'ān entitled: ` An Enlightening Commentary into the Light of the Holy Qur'ān ' was urgently distributed throughout the world. These two volumes were so ardently and well received by the thirsty readers that over the following one and a half years we had to reprint them four times and, as a result, fortunately it happened that this Religious Research Center has been honoured to happily welcome more than four thousand letters received from various addresses all over the world, including those in European countries, different states of America, and many sites in Asia, Africa and Australia. The people of these locales, those busy in universities, research centers, and other similar institutes, or even in prisons, whose letters are all available in this library, frequently asked for these commentary books. They liked them very much and appreciated them abundantly, so much so that we .cannot evaluate its depth or extent

Now, by the might and strength of Allah, this most recent volume is presented to the lovers of Monotheism, the Qur'ān, and the Islamic theology hoping that it will be favourably accepted by Allah, the Merciful, and also be specifically regarded by His remaining emissary, the Expected Mahdī (May Allah hasten his glad advent) and, finally, be received by his true deputies, i.e., the grand ` marāji` taqlīd ' (sources of imitation) especially the great leader of the revolution and master of Muslims' affairs .at the present time: Ayatullah-il-Uẓmā Sayyid Ali Khāminehee

Sayyid Kamāl Faghīh Imānī

Researcher and Founder of the Scientific and Religious Research Center

Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (a.s.) Public Library

Isfahan, Islamic Republic of Iran

Transliteration of Arabic Letters

Long Vowels		Short Vowels		Diphthongs	
آ ا	ā	ـَ	a	اَی	aī
و	ū	ـُ	u	اَو	aū
ی	ī	ـِ	i	اَوْ	au

Letters

ب	b	ط	ṭ
ت	t	ظ	ẓ
ث	θ	ع	‘
ج	j	غ	q̇
ح	ḥ	ف	f
خ	x	ق	q
د	d	ک	k
ذ	ð	ل	l
ر	r	م	m
ز	z	ن	n
س	s	و	w, ū, aū
ش	š	ه	h
ص	ṣ	ی	y
ض	ḍ	ة	ah, at

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحيمْ

The Holy Qur'an

PART ١

بِسْمِ اللّهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحيْم

Sura Al–Fatiḥah (The Opening) No.١

Point

(Verses ٧)

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

Contents of the Sura

Point

The Holy phrase`In The Name of Allah,The Beneficent,The Merciful' / bism-il-lāh-ir-raḥmān-ir-raḥīm / is, in fact, mentioned both at the onset of the Qur'ān and at the beginning of every Sura, except Sura ٩, (Sura Taubah - Repentance). And, since the purpose of Allah's Word, i.e. the whole Qur'ān, is to guide people; as Sura Al-Mā'idah, No. ٥, verses ١٥-١۶ say : "...Indeed, there has come to you a light and a clear Book from Allah ", " With it Allah guideth him who follows His pleasure to the ways of peace and safety ..."; therefore, this guidance, being a grant and a fundamental principle, begins .with Allah's Holy Name

This Sura, among all Suras of the Qur'ān, has an extraordinary radiance which :originates from the following merits

: The Tone of the Sura .١

This Sura, The Opening, in comparison with other Suras of the Qur'ān regarding its tone and melody, has a particular style which is clearly different and extraordinary. The other Suras contain instructions from Allah, Who gives commands and admonishments to His servants, but, in this Sura, His words are uttered on behalf of the servants. In other words, in this Sura, Allah has taught His servants how to .supplicate and speak to Him, simply and without a mediator

: Al–Fātiḥah, the Basis of the Qur'ān .٢

It is narrated that the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) has said : " By the One, in Whose hand is my soul, Allah has not sent down a similar Sura to this Sura (Al-Fātiḥah), neither in the Turah, nor in the Gospel, nor in

the Psalms, nor even in the Qur'ān, and it is Umm-ul-Kitāb ";(١) which means that it is .the basis and origin of all excellence

In fact, besides referring to the Resurrection, this Sura presents facts concerning the Unity of the Divine Essence, Unity of Attributes, Unity of Divine Acts, and Unity of .Worship. It is the essence of the whole meaning of the Qur'ān

It is narrated from Hadrat Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (a.s.) that : " All secrets of Allah are in Divine Books; and the contents of all those Divine Books are comprised in the Qur'ān; and what is found in the Qur'ān is condensed in Sura Al-Fātiḥah, and what is in Al-Fātiḥah is gathered in /bismillāh /, and what is in / bismillāh / is concentrated in /b/, (the (first letter of ` Bism-il-lāh ')..." (٢

Based on the entirety of great commentators' statements, it is understood that this tradition indicates clearly the importance of both the Holy Qur'an and /bismillah-ir-rahman-ir-rahim / in which science and knowledge, from the beginning to the end, is comprised. The interpreter and elucidator of these sciences is the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.), and after him there are his true vicegerents including Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali ((a.s.). (٣

: (.Al-Fatihah, Magnificent Honour of the Prophet (p.b.u.h .٣

Sura Al-Fatihah, more so than the other Suras in the Holy Qur'an, was revealed to the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) as a great bounty. It stands on a par with the whole Qur'an. The :seven verses in the Sura the sum up the whole Quran

And We have bestowed on the the even Oft-repeated (verses) and the Grand" Qur'an", (Sura Al-Hijr, No. ١٥, verse ٨٧). This meaning is also referred to in a narration from Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (a.s.) quoting the Prophet's (p.b.u.h.) tradition who said :" Verily, Allah, the Exalted, has bestowed (His) favours on me particularly for 'The Opening '(Al-Fatihah) and has positioned it on a par with the whole Grand Qur'an, and surely Fatihat-ul-Kitāb (the Opening of the Qur'an) is the dearest (item) in the treasures of the Arsh, (Throne of

Majm-ul-Bayan, vol. ۱, p. ۱۷ ۱ -۱

Makhzan-ul-'Irfan, Commentary, vol. ۱, p. ۲۸ and Masabih-ul-Anwar vol. ۱, p. ۴۳۵ ۲ -۲

Manhajus-Sadiqin, vol. ۱, p. ۹۰ ۳ -۳

(Heaven) "? (۱)

: The Importance of its Recitation .۴

The recitation of this Sura, because of its extreme importance, is frequently emphasized in Islamic traditions and narrations.

As for its virtue, it is narrated from the holy Prophet(p.b.u.h.) that: " The reward of any Muslim who recites the Sura Opening 's is like that of a person who has recited two thirds of the Qur'an, and so much reward would he receive as if he has given every believing Muslim, man or woman, a free will offering" (۲)

: The Titles of the Sura .۵

There are ten titles given to this Sura, as taken from Islamic narrations and commentary books, thus: Fatihat-ul-Kitab, Umm-ul-Kitab, Umm-ul-Qur'an, Sab-ul-Mathāni, Al-Wafiyah, Al-Kafiyah, Ash-Shafiyah, Al-Asās, Aş-Şalāt, and Al-Hamd.(۳)

۱- Al-Burhan Fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an, vol. one, p. ۲۱; and Atyab-ul-Bayan, vol. ۱, p. ۸۳

۲- Majma'-ul-Bayan, vol. one, p. ۱۷.

۳- Rauh-ul-Janan, Abul-Futuh Rāzi, Commentary, vol. one, p. ۱۶

Sura Al–Fatihah, Arabic

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

(Sura Al-Fatiḥah (The Opening) No. ١(٧verses

«بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ (١)»

«الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ (٢)»

«الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ (٣)»

«مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ (٤)»

«إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ (٥)»

«اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ (٦)»

«صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ (٧)»

p:٣٦

English Translation

Sura Al-Fatihah

(The Opening) No. ١ (Verses ١-٧)

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful." ٢." (All) praise is (only) Allah," .١
".the Lord of the Worlds

".The Beneficent, The Merciful .٣

Master of the Day of Judgement." ٥." Thee (alone) do we worship and of Thee (only) .۴
".do we seek help

Guide us (O' Lord) on the Straight Path." ٧. "The path of those upon whom Thou " .۶
,hast bestowed Thy bounties, not (the path) of those inflicted with Thy wrath

".nor (of those) gone astray

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

".In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful" .١

Commentary : Verse ١

Everything should begin in his holy name

It is a custom among most people of the world to recite the name of one of their great and very beloved personalities that the worthiness of their work might be elevated. That is, they relate that work to that personality from the very beginning of their .endeavour

Among all beings, the One Who is eternal is only Allah, and, therefore, everything and every activity should begin with His Holy Name. It should be enveloped in His Light, and help should be always asked only from Him. So, in the first verse of the Qur'an, we recite 'Bism-illah-ir-Rahmän-ir-Rahim' (In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful). This action should not be done only with the tongue, but it should be done

truly and meaningfully, because this kind of connection with Him sets work in the right direction and keeps it far

p:٣٧

from any deviation. For this very reason, such a work will certainly be successful and .blessed

Traditions adn Narrations

The holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.), in a tradition, has said: Any important work that begins (without mentioning / bismillah l, will remain invalid.(١)

After narrating this tradition, Hadrat Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (a.s.) added: "For every action that a person wants to do, he/she shoul recite / bismillah-ir-rahmān-ir-rahim I, which means that he/she begins the action with the Name of Allah, and every action (that begins with the Name of Allah is blessed." (٢)

On the excellence and importance of/ bism-il-lah /, it is narrated from All-ibn-Musa-r-Rida (a.s.), who has said thus: " (The holy phrase "Bism-il-lāh-ir-Rahmān-ir-Rahim' is (closer to the Exalted Name of Allah than the pupil is to the white of the eye ".(٣)

Again, Ibn-Abbas narrates from the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) thus: "As soon as a teacher tells a child to say 'Bism-il-lah-ir-Rahmān-ir-Rahim' and the child says it, Allah records (immunity (from fire) for the child, his or her parents and the teacher".(۴)

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) has said: "No Holy Book ever came down from heaven but that it (began with 'Bism-il-lah-ir-Rahmān-ir-Rahim."(۵)

In 'Khisal' by Shaykh Sadaq it is cited that Imam Baqir (a.s.) has said: "... When we begin an action, great or small, it is appropriate to recite bism-il-lah-ir-rahmān-ir-(rahim, and that action may be blessed ".(۶)

.In short, the stability and permanence of an action is due to this very relation to Allah

The phrase / bism-il-lah / at the start of the Sura, teaches us to seek the help of Allah from His pure perfect Essence when we begir any action. That is why Allah, the Exalted, in the first verses revealed to the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) instructed him to - initiating the

۱- ۱ Bihar-ul-Anwar, vol. ۷۶, chapter ۵۸, p. ۳۰۵ (according to 'Tafsir Al-Bayan', vol. one,
p. ۴۶۱)

۲- ۲ Bihar-ul-Anwar, vol. ۷۶, chapter ۵۸

۳- ۳ Majma'-ul-Bayān, vol. ۱, p. ۱۸

۴- ۴ Ibid

۵- ۵ Al-Mahāsin by Barghi p. ۴۰ and Bihar-ul-Anwar, vol. ۹۲, p. ۲۳۴

۶- ۶ Tafsir-us-Sāti, vol. ۱, p. ۷۰ and Al-Mizān, vol. ۱, p. ۲۶ (Persian version)

proclamation of Islam - perform this great task with the Name of Allah: Proclaim in the Name of your Lord…".(Sura Al-'Alaq, No.٩۶. werse ١): and the words of Noah (a.s.) to his followers, at the time of the Flood are: "So he said: 'Embark ye on the Ark, in the Name of Allah, whether it moves or be at rest! …" (Sura Hus, No.١١, verse ۴١). Again. Soloman's letter to the Queen of Sheba begins, thus: " It is from Soloman, and is (as follows): 'In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful" (Sura An-Naml, No. ٢٧. .(verse ٣٠

Based on the same principle, all of the Suras of the Holy Qur'an, (except Sura At-Taubah, No. ٩) begin with / bism-il-lah /(١) in order to pursue the essential aim of guiding man and leading him to prosperity with success, far from getting a taste of .defeat

In any event, when we begin our work with reliance upon the Supreme Power of Allah, Whose Power is above all power, we feel, psychologically speaking, far more powerful; therefore, we may be more confident. We may try more, be more persevering, and more courageous in challenging with difficulties, more hopeful, and, similarly, our intentions and the essence of our actions may be more purified. At the .time of beginning any affair, reciting the Name of Allah is the secret to its success

To whatever extent we further explain this verse, it will still be seen insufficient, because, according to a narration, Hadrat Ali (a.s.), regarding the commentary of the verse, talked to Ibn-Abbas from the beginning of a night until the next morning, but it was only for the commentary of /b/, the first letter of / bism-il-lah-ir-rahman-ir-(rahim/. (٢

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: Explanation

? Is the Phrase Bism-il-lah'a Part of Each Sura

Almost all Islamic scholars unanimously hold the opinion that / bism-il-lah-ir-rahman-ir-rahim/ is, as was stated before, a part of Sura

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۱- The phrase /bism-il-h/ is used as a contraction of /bism-il-lah-ir-rahman-ir-rahim/.

۲- Makhzan-ul-'Irfan, vol. ۱, p. ۲۸ ۲

Al-Fatihah and, also, of the other Suras of the Qur'an (exc At-Taubah, No. ٩). In essence, the inclusion of /bism-il-lah/ at the beginning of all Suras of the Holy Qur'an, except the above mentioned one, is a vital piece of evidence bearing witness to this very fact, and the belief is so firm that no change has been made in the Qur'an and nothing has been added to it since it was revealed to the Prophet of Islam (p.b.ueh).(.

Allah, the Most Inclusive Name of God

Mu'awiyat-ibn-Ammar, one of the companions of Imam Sadia (a s.), said that he had asked the Imam whether he should say bism-il-lah-ir-rahman-ir-rahim / at the beginning of Sura Al-Fatihah when he stood for prayer, and he (a.s.) replied: " Yes ". He had questioned him (a.s.), again, as to if he should recite /bism-il-lah/ when Sura Al-Fatihah ended and before reciting the next Sura. Then, Imam Sadiq (as.), again, answered: " Yes".(١)

Dar Qutni, a Muslim learned researcher, according to a sound document, narrates from Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (a.s.) that someone asked him (a.s.):" What is As-Sab-al-Mathani (Seven Verses)?" " It is Sura Al-Hamd "he (a.s.) answered. The man said: " Sura Al-Hamd consists of six verses". He (a s.) replied: " Bism-illah-ir-Rahmān-ir-Rahim 'is also one verse."(٢)

Moreover, Muslims have always preserved the practice of reciting / bism-il-lah-ir-rahman-ir-rahim / at the beginning of every Sura (except Sura ٩) when reciting the Holy Qur'an, and it has been proven, on numerous accounts, that the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) used to recite it, too.

It has been said that Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (a.s.) was asked to say whether / bism-il-lah-ir-raḥmān-ir-rahim / was a part of Sura Al-Fatihah. He (a.s.) answered: " Yes, the Messenger of Allah used to recite it and considered it one verse (of the verses) of the Sura, and he said that 'Fatihat-ul-Kitab (The Opening) is the same as (seven verses),"(٣)

Al-Kah, vol. ۳, p.۳۱۲ ۱ -۱

Alliqan, vol. ۱. p. ۱۳۶ ۲ -۲

Atyab-ul-Bayan, vol. ۱, p. ۹۲ ۳ -۳

Allah, the Most Inclusive Name of God

The term / ism / in the phrase / bism-il-lah /, as men of letters in Arabic literature say, is originally derived from / sumuww / with the meaning of 'height, elevation'. The reason why any 'noun' is called by

appellation is that after choosing to call a 'noun' by the particular given 'name' (ism), the hidden meaning of the expression appears, and The sense of the 'name' is elevated, therefore forsaking meaninglessness.

In the phrase / bism-il-lah /, the word Allah is the most complete and comprehensive name among the Lord's many names. This is because each of Allah's names, which are found in the Holy Qur'an, as well as in other Islamic sources, truly reflects one particular aspect of Allah's Attributes. In other words, the only name that refers to all of His Attributes of Glory and Beauty, is Allah. That is why other names are often used as modifiers for the word 'Allah'. For example, "Allah is oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful", (Sura Al-Baqarah, No. ٢.verse ٢٢۶), refers to Allah's forgiveness; "..Allah heareth and knoweth all things", (No.٢, verse ٢٢٧) shows His being well-acquainted with what is audible and what comes to pass, respectively; " And Allah sees well all that you do", (Sura Al-Hujurat, No. ۴٩, verse is) states that He has information on everything that is done by anyone; "Surely Allah is He Who gives (all) sustenance, the Lord of Power, steadfast (for ever)", (Sura Ath-Thariyat, No. ۵١, verse ۵٨) points to His giving sustenance to all creatures and, at the same time, discloses that He is powerful and firm in His actions.

And, finally, Sura Al-Hashr, No. ۵٩, verses ٢٣,٢۴ reveals some other Attributes of Allah. The terms 'Creator' and 'Evolver ' are suggestive of His creativeness and inventiveness, and 'Bestower of Forms ' indicates His giving shapes: " Allah is He, than Whom there is no other god;-the Sovereign, the Holy One, the Source of Peace (and Perfection), the Guardian of Faith, the Preserver of Safety, the Exalted in Might, the Irresistible, the Supreme (in creating all creatures)...." "He is Allah, the Creator, the Evolver, the Bestower of Forms, to Him belong the Most Beautiful Names...."

Another piece of evidence which is a clear indication that this Name, Allah is all-

inclusive is that the acceptance of Faith, in Islam, is

p:۴۱

possible only by reciting the sentence: / la ilaha illalah/" There is no god but Allah"; and each of the other phrases such as: All-Knowing or Creator', or 'Bestower of Sustenance, and the like, alone is not sufficient enough to proclaim as evidence of Monotheism in Islam. And, that is why in religions other than Islam, the God of Muslims is referred to as 'Allah', because it is only Muslims who use 'Allah' to refer to .what they do worship

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:Allah's General and Specific Mercy

The words ar-Rahmān' (The Beneficent) and 'ar-Rahim (The Merciful) are adjectives, both derived from far-Raḥmah' (Mercy). The former word, the Beneficent, as it is popularly recognized among some commentators, refers to the General Mercy of Allah which is bestowed upon all creatures, among them are the believers and the disbelievers, good-doers and evildoers. And, as we can see, the Divine bounties of life are distributed everywhere and all human beings enjoy the endless merits therein. This is their sustenance. They draw it out of the abundant blessings encompassing the .whole world of existence

The word 'ar-Rahim' (The Merciful) refers to that Specific Mercy that is endowed upon the believing, obedient servants alone. The believers, because of their true belief, good actions, and faithful active obedience, deserve this special, exclusive mercy, of .which the disbelievers are deprived

The particular fact ratifying this topic is that the word Rahmān is always used in the Qur'an with the meaning of an infinite form of mercy, which is a sign of its generality, while the word Rahim sometimes used with the meaning of a finite form, which is a sign of its specificity such as: "... And He is full of Mercy to the Believers", (SUTA Al-Ahzab, No. ٣٣, verse ٤٣). And it is sometimes used in an in form such as in Sura Al-Fatihah.

A narration from Imam Sadiq (a.s.) says: " Allah is the God of all things and is Beneficent to all His creatures, and He is Merciful, especially

(to the believers." (١)

Therefore, at the moment that we initiate any action, when we begin with the Name of Allah, we must seek His Mercy, General and Specific Mercy, both.

It is interesting to note that this power, which has a broad concept much the same as gravitational pull, and has the ability to draw hearts closer together, is the very Attribute of Mercy. This Attribute of Mercy is the very means by which men can attain a close relationship with the Creator, also.

That is why true believers, when reciting the holy verse bism-il-lah-ir-raḥmān-ir-rahim/, at the beginning of their affairs, detach their hearts from everything else and rely only upon Allah, and seek help only from Him, because He is the only One Whose Mercy is "All-Encompassing' and no creature is deprived of it.

Another fact that can also be understood from / bism-il-lah / is that Allah's acts are based on Mercy, and, punishment has an exceptional aspect which will not be fulfilled unless there are some exact, clear reasons for it.

When we recite the supplication entitled, "Jaushan Kabir', Section ٢٠ thus : " O'Lord, Whose Mercy surpasses His Wrath..." the above point becomes clear.

Human beings should attach importance to mercy and affection and behave accordingly in their daily lives and use violence and harshness only for those times when it is clearly warranted.

We conclude this discussion with a tradition, rich in meaning, from the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.), who, when commenting on the many different kinds of His All-Encompassing Mercy, said: "Verily, there are one hundred mercies belonging to Allah, from which, He has sent down to the Earth only one and distributed that one among His creatures. All the mercy and affection they have, issue from it. He, the Merciful, withheld the other ٩٩ for Himself to show mercy upon His servants on the Day of Resurrection".(٢)

١ - Kafi, Tauhid by Şaduq, and Mafani-yul-Akhbar, (according to Almizan Commentary).

٢ - Majma'-ul-Bayān, vol. ١, p. ٢١

الحمدلله رب العالمين

All) praise is (only) Allah's, the Lord of the Worlds) *

Commentary : Verse ٢

The World is Full of His Mercy

After reciting the phrase / bism-il-lah-ir-Rahmān-ir-Rahim/ I, to begin the Sura, our first duty is to bring to mind the Great Creator and Cherisher of the world of being, and His endless bounties which have surrounded us thoroughly. In doing so, it is both 'a guide ' for us to observe the existence of Providence and 'a motive 'for showing our .servitude and worship to Him

It is 'a motive' because any man, after receiving a gift, wishes to know its giver at once, in order to show his gratitude and thankfulness to him. This quality is in man's .innate disposition prompting him to manifest his acknowledgment of Him

This same quality in man, in discussing the theological motives of 'the necessity of expressing thankfulness to the Bestower', according to what man's nature and .rationale leads him to, is considered one of those motives

And it is a guide to knowing the Lord and His bounties, because the best and the most direct way towards the acknowledgment of the Origin is the study of the secrets of .creation, especially, the existence o the bounties of life as related to human beings

Therefore, perhaps, it is for these two reasons that Sura Al-Fatihah, alongside /bism-il-lah/, begins thus:" (All) praise is (only Allah's, the Lord of the Worlds."

Or, in other words, the verse" (All) praise is (only) Allah's,! Lord of the Worlds" points to .both the Unity of Divine Essence, and Unity of Divine Attributes and Acts

Originally, qualifying Allah (s.w.t.), here, with the po /rabb-il-'alamin/ (the Lord of the Worlds) is, in fact, mentioni reason after stating the claim. It seems that someone has asked praise is (only) Allah's, and the response is that it is for the reason that

.'He is the Lord of the Worlds

This is one of the characteristics of Allah. In another occurrence, the Holy Qur'an says: "He Who has made every thing when He has created most good ...." (Sura As-Sajdah, .(No. ۳۲, verse ۷

And again, in Sura Hus, No. ۱۱. verse ۶, it says: " There is no moving creature on the ....earth but its sustenance depends on Allah

It is, also, clearly understood from the word /al-hamd/, 'praise, used in this verse, that .Allah has created all these bounties and benefits, basically, by His Choice and His Will

It is interesting to note that by stating the phrase, '(All) praise (only) Allah's, it is not only helpful to use it for the commencement of affairs, but, as the Qur'an teaches us, it is also used as a conclusion, like in Sura Yunus, No.۱۰, verse ۱۰, about the good-doers in Heaven, it says: "(This will be) their cry therein: "Glory to Thee, O God!' And 'peace' will be their greeting therein! And the close of their cry will be: Surely, the ."'!Praise is Allah's, the Lord of the Worlds

Virtue of the Verse

Concerning the virtue of this Holy verse, there is a narration from Imam Sadiq (a.s.) which says that in a tradition from the Prophet (p.b.u.h.), he has said: " When a believing servant says 'The Praise is (only) Allah's, the Lord of the Worlds, such a praise that befits Him and His Rank, the angels are unable to record it. They will be asked by Allah why they did not record the reward of the phrase which the believing servant stated. Then, in response to their not recording the reward, they will ask how it is that they could even understand and estimate the high standard of saying such a phrase which contains the praise befitting and deserving only to Him. Allah, thc Exalted, will tell them that they should record the phrase and it would be for Him to (endow the servant with the reward of the praise as befitting Him ".(۱

/The word /rabb

The word /rabb/originally means 'the owner of something who proceeds to train and

!improve it

This word is absolutely applied to Allah, alone, and if it is

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Maani-ul-Akhbar. p. ۳۲, tradition ۸; and, Tafsir Furāt-ul-Kufi, vol. ۱, p. ۵۲ ۱ -۱

applied, in Arabic, for other than Him, it is certainly used in a possessive form, as / rabb-ud-dar / the owner of the house, or / rabb-us-safinab 'the owner of the ship! In .’any case, the word, itself, conveys the meaning of ‘training

There is another idea mentioned in Majma'-ul-Bayān that says: "/rabb/ means: 'an important person whose orders are obeyed." However, it is probable that both .meanings refer to the same origin

/The term /alamin

The term /alamin/ is the plural form of /alam/ The world' and we cite it, here, with the meaning of 'a collection of different creatures with common characteristics or a common time and place'. For example, we say: the world of Man, the world of animals, and the world of plants, or, we say: the world of the East and the world of the West, or the world of today and the world of yesterday. Therefore, when /ālam/, which has a .'plural sense by itself, is used in a plural form, it refers to the 'universe

The writer of the Al-Manar Commentary says that it is narrated from Imam Sadiq (a.s.) that he has said /'alamin/ means “peoples', only. Then, the writer adds that the term is used in the Qur'an with the same meaning, for example: "...That it may be an (admonition to all peoples", (Sura Al-Furqan, No.۲۵. verse ۱).(۱

It is true that the term l'alamin/ in many occurrences, in the Qur'an, is used with the meaning of 'peoples', but, sometimes, it is also used with a broader scope of meaning which envelops other creatures; for instance: " Then Praise be to Allah, Lord of the heavens and Lord of the earth, -Lord and Cherisher of all the worlds!", (Sura Al-Jathiyah, No. ۴۵. verse ۳۶). And, also, like: "Pharaoh said: “And what is the Lord and Cherisher of the Worlds ?' (Moses) said: 'The Lord and Cherisher of the heavens and .(the earth, and all between them ...", (Sura Ash-Shu'ara No.۲۶, verses ۲۳,۲۴

It is interesting that in a narration from Hadrat Ali (a.s.), Şaduq has cited in the book "Uyün-ul-Akhbar', that he (a.s.), commenting on the verse, has said: " (The phrase) (Irabb-il-alarnin/ refers to all creatures whether they are inanimate or living".(۲

,There is, of course, no contradiction between these traditions

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Al-Manar Commentary, vol. ۱, p. ۵۱ ۱ -۱

Nur-uth-Thaqalayn Commentary, vol. ۱, p. ۱۷ ۲ -۲

because, although the meaning of the term /'alamin/ is very vast, Man is the most significant being among all creatures of the world, so, he is sometimes especially considered the central point of them, and other creatures are dependent upon him and in his shadow. Therefore, when, in the tradition of the Imam (a.s.), the term is rendered into peoples, the reason is that the main purpose of creation, in this great .gathering of beings, is Man

macrocosm and microcosm

This point is, also, interesting that some have introduced two forms of /alam/ 'the world': 'the great world' (macrocosm) and the lesser world' (microcosm) by which they refer to Man as 'the lesser world', because the entity of a person alone, is a collection of different powers which govern 'the great world'. In fact,'man' is a sample of the whole world. So Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (a.s.) in one of his poems, addressing Man, says: "You think that you are a small body, while (you should know that you contain ".the great world' (macrocosm) inside you

One of the factors that causes us to emphasize the vast meaning of / 'alām / the world', is that the term has occurred after the phrase /al-hamd-u-lil-lah/, in which we ,devote all the praise to Allah, only, and

The Lord of the then, we reason our statement with /rabb-il-'alamin/ Worlds! We say the praise is only Allah's, because all perfections, all bounties and all blessings, in this .world, belong to Him, the Lord, the Cherisher

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الرحمن الرحيم

".The Beneficent, The Merciful"

Commentary : Verse ۳

Point

The meaning of /ar-raḥmān/' the Beneficent' and /ar-rahim/ the Merciful, together

with their broad sense of meaning and the difference between them, was explained at length while commenting on /bism-il-lah/, the repetition of which is not required.(1)

1- From the collection of Poems of Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali-ibn Abitalib (a.s.). p. 175

A point that should be added to the commentary, here regarding 'ar-Rahman' and 'ar-Rahim', is that these two attributes which are the most significant attributes of Allah, are repeated at least ٣٠ every day, in our (٥) daily prayers, (twice in Sura Al-Fatihahana in the Sura we recite after it). In this way, we praise Allah sixty times as .being 'Merciful' each day

This, indeed, is a lesson taught to all human beings more than anything else that they should try to acquire this attribute, and practice it in their daily lives and activities. Moreover, it points to the fact that if we count ourselves among the true, obedient servants of Allah, we should not follow or imitate the manner in which tyrant slave owners use against their servants when dealing with our servants

The history of slavery indicates that the tyrant owners used to treat their slaves in horrifyingly cruel ways. For example, if a slave moved a little slow in performing services, he would receive harsh punishments: i.e. be whipped, put in chains or fetters, fastened to a mill-stone and forced to turn it, instructed to work in mines, imprisoned in deep, dark, wet holes and, if his faults were greater, he would be .hanged

Another reference in the history of slavery also shows that condemned slaves were put in wild animal cages. If the slave succeeded in staying alive, another animal would .be let in on him

These are some examples of the conduct of some owners with their slaves. But, Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, has mentioned repeatedly, in the Holy Qur'an, that Allah is Oft-Forgiving and Most Merciful to the servants who are repentant of their disobedience to Him. For example: Sura Az-Zumar, No.٣٩, verse ٣ says: "Say: 'O' My servants who have transgressed against their souls! Despair not of the Mercy of Allah: ."for Allah forgives all sins, for He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful

Therefore, the terms 'ar-Rahman' (the Beneficent) and 'ar-Rahim (the Merciful) used after the phrase /rabb-il-'alamin/ 'the Lord of the Worlds' refer to the idea that, He,

with the absolute Power He has, s yet Merciful to all His creatures. This quality, which Allah possesses, attracts His servants to Him and they eagerly say: 'ar-Rahmān-ir-.(Rahim, (the Beneficent, the Merciful

belief in Allah is the first of the five principles of Islam

It is here that one's attention is drawn to the fact that the behaviour of Allah, the Exalted, toward His creatures is, by far, different from that of masters toward their servants, in particular, during the horrible period of slavery.

Therefore, belief in Allah is the first of the five principles of Islam.

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ملک یوم الدین

"Master of the Day of Judgement."

Commentary : Verse ۴

Faith in the Resurrection', the Second Principle

In this verse, attention is paid to the second important principle in Islam, i.e. Resurrection and the Hereafter when it says:

"Master of the Day of Judgement."

Thus, the focus of the idea of the Origin and End, which is the main foundation of all ethical and social improvements in Man, reaches the peak of perfection.

It is noteworthy, here, that the mastership of Allah, or His Ownership, is pointed out, which illustrates His Sovereignty and Domination over everything and everyone on that Day, when all human beings will attend that Great Court for reckoning, before their real and genuine Master. They will see all their deeds and even their thoughts present without there being aught less than the original or anything forgotten. They will even have to accept their share of responsibility for any customs for which they have merely been the founders of, not necessarily the doers of them.

Allah's Ownership

Allah's Ownership, on that Day, is not similar to our imaginary ownership of that which

belongs to us from the things of this world. His Ownership, regarding the world of existence, is the real ownership. It is the special dependence of creatures on the Lord and their being in need of Him. If the flow of His blessings ceased even for a single moment, it

.would cause them to perish altogether

In other words, this ownership is the consequence of His Creatorship and Divinity. He, Who creates beings, gives them life every moment and cherishes them, protects them and guides them, is the real master of all creatures. As a matter of fact, He is the .only Ruler of all powers in the world of existence

? Is not Allah the Absolute Owner of this world

There is no doubt that Allah is the Lord of the Worlds . The question to be raised here is this: Is not Allah the Absolute Owner of this world ?' versus our statement to this effect that He is the Master of the Day of Judgement. The answer to this question lies in the fact that the Ownership of Allah though it comprises both worlds, enjoys further manifestation in the Hereafter. This is because all material ties and imaginary ownerships are cut off (in the Hereafter), and no one has anything of his or her own on That Day. Even intercession, if ever achieved, is by Allah's command, as the Qur'an says about the Reckoning Day: "The Day on which no soul shall have aught for (another) soul, and the command That Day shall be (wholly) Allah's" (Sura Al-Infitar, .(No. ۸۲, verse ۱۹

In other words, occasions arise, in this world, when one helps another through his or her speech, money, power, advocates, plans, designs, and so on. On That Day (the Hereafter), however, certainly not a single trace of such affairs will exist. Therefore, when people are asked: " Whose will be the Domination This Day ?...", they answer: "... that of Allah, the One, the Almighty!" (Sura Al-Mu'min, No. ۴۰, verse ۱۶). This is also an answer to those who reject the idea that when Allah is the Owner of everything why, ! then, He is called the Master of the Day of Judgement

Man, with no belief in the Hereafter and the Day of Reckoning, would have the potential to be the most immoral of beings, the biggest tyrant committing the worst and the most hideous crimes, for, in his view, there is not any one to question or punish him if he is clever enough not to get caught and, with such characteristics, sometimes, it would be so terrible or impossible for other fellow-creatures to continue their lives in this world. Therefore, faith in life after death and the Day of Judgement,

which is an essential part of Islam, like prayer, is very helpful in controlling men .against committing sins

Emphasizing the Ownership of Allah on the Day of Judgement has this effect, too, that it stands against the disbelief of disbelievers in the Hereafter. It is understood from the verses of the Holy Qur'an that Faith in Allah has been a common belief even among disbelievers in the Age of Ignorance. Sura Luqman, No. ۳۱, verse ۲۵ says about them: " If thou ask them, who it is that created the heavens and the earth, they will certainly say: 'Allah…", while they did not accept the speech of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) about the Resurrection: " The Unbelievers say (in ridicule): 'Shall we point to you a man that will tell you, when ye are all scattered to pieces in disintegration, that ye shall (then be raised) in a New creation ?"" Has he invented a falsehood against Allah, .(or has a spirit (seized) him ?…", (Sura Saba, No. ۳۴, verses ۷,۸

A tradition from Imam Sajjad (a.s.) says: " When All-ibn-il-Husayn (a.s.) began reciting Master of the Day of Judgement', he repeated it so many times that he was at the (point of losing his life".(۱

The phrase / yaum-id-din /, is repeated more than ten times in the Qur'an, exclusively with the meaning of the Hereafter': "And what makes you know what the Day of Reckoning is ? " " Again, what makes you know what the Day of Reckoning is ? " " The Day on which no soul shall have aught for (another) soul, and the command that Day .(shall be (wholly) Allah's " (Sura Al-Infitar, No. ۸۲, verses ۱۷-۱۹

The phrase yaum-id-din/ is used in the sense of the Day of Judgement', for "That Day' is the day of rewards; and /din/ in Arabic philology means: 'reward, recompensel. The most evident procedure fulfilled in the Hereafter is the procedure of paying rewards or inflicting punishments. On That Day, the curtains will be removed and the deeds of all will be reckoned, precisely, and everyone shall reap the fruit of his own actions, be .they good or evil

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) said in a tradition that the Day of Judgement is The Reckoning (Day!(۲

It is also noteworthy to mention that some commentators believe that 'Resurrection' is called /yaum-ud-din/ because on That Day, everyone is recompensed for his own .religion, if he has followed it accordingly

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Nür-uth-Thaqalayn, Commentary, vol. ۱. p. ۱۹ ۱ -۱

Majma'-ul-Bayan, vol. ۱. p. ۲۴: and , Manhaj-us-Sadiqin, vol. ۱. p. ۲۴ ۲ -۲

ایاک نعبد وإیاک نستعین

.Thee (alone) do we worship and of Thee (only) do we seek help"

Commentary : Verse ۵

Man in the Presence of Allah

Here, this verse is a start for a servant to plea and ask his needs from Allah. In fact, from here on the tone of the statements changes, The former verses were the praise and attributes of Allah, and the statement of Faith in His Pure Unity, consisting of a confession to the belief in the Day of Resurrection. But, from this verse on, it seems that the servant, with that firm foundation of Belief in the knowledge of

Allah, sees himself in front of Him, the Pure Essence. He addresses Him and speaks, firstly, about his own worship for Him and, then, about His help which he seeks from :Him. Thus he says

".Thee (alone) do we worship and of Thee (only) do we seek help

In other words, when the concepts of the former verses settle in one's soul, and his entire entity is enlightened with the Light of Allah, the Cherisher of the Worlds, and when he recognizes His General Mercy' and 'Specific Mercy, the individual transforms into a complete person from the point of belief' and 'Faith'. The prime fruit of this deep belief in monotheism, for a person, in one respect, is to be a pure true servant of Allah, free from any idol and idolatry, far from tyrants and lusts; and, on the other hand, to .seek help only from His Pure Essence

In fact, the former verses state the Unity of Essence and Attributes, while, here, the .statement is regarding the Unity of Worship and Unity of Acts

Unity of Worship

Unity of Worship ' means that we acknowledge no person or thing worthy of worship other than Allah, Whose commands alone do we obey and Whose laws only do we follow, avoiding any kind of servitude and submission to other than Him, the Pure

.Essence

Unity of Acts

Unity of Acts' means that we clearly recognize Him as the only real' Author of Causes' in the world. It does not mean that we would

refuse the world of 'cause' and be neglectful of searching for the causes of things, but it means that we would believe that any effect from any cause is under His command. .It is He Who has given heat to fire, light to the sun, and vivacity to water

The outcome of this belief is that one relies on Allah alone, and knows that all authority and power are His only. In his view, other than Him is powerless, mortal and .perishable

Allah is the only Essence to be relied on and worshipped. It is only He Who is deserving .of man's reliance for everything

This kind of thought and belief sets man apart from anyone or any thing else and joins him only to Allah. He obeys Allah even when he pursues after the world of ways and .means ', i.e. he sees the Power of Allah, the Cause of causes, in control of the means

This belief elevates the soul of man so high and the scope of his thought so broad that it reaches eternity and becomes free from any limited circumstances, in so far as, Hadrat Amir-ul-Mu'mineen, the Master of the Virtuous, Ali (a.s.), regarding Allah, says: " I worship you neither for the fear of the Fire (of Your Hell) nor for the desire of Your (Paradise, but I found You fit for worshipping and I worshipped You."(١

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: Explanation

Allah: the Only Site of Reliance

According to the Arabic literature, when the object of the verb precedes its subject, in that language, the meaning of exclusiveness is understood, and, here, the word / iyyaka / Thou 'has preceded the words / na'bud / we worship and / nasta in /we seek help' which indicates exclusiveness in which its result is the very Unity of Worship and Unity of Acts that were explained before. Even in our own worship, we need His help for which we must ask Him. We may be involved in self-conceit, deviation, hypocrisy and similar things, which

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Bihar-ul-Anwar, vol. ۷۲, p. ۱۸۶ ۱ -۱

destroy our worshipping and servitude totally. Then, in all affairs and activities, our full .attention should be exclusively on Allah, the Exalted

In other words, this, in itself, is one of the stages of monotheism, a high stage of it, which is rendered into 'monotheism in speculation'. That is, one should always and in all circumstances, think of Allah only. He should rely exclusively on Allah. He should fear nothing but Allah; and he should trust Allah only. He should see nothing save Allah; he should want nothing save Allah; and he should love none save Allah. As the Qur'an says: " Allah has not made for any man two hearts in his (one) body..." (Sura Al-.(Ahzab, No. ٣٣, verse ۴

The Social Aspect of Worship

The pronoun 'we', which is in the plural form, used in terms ٧ na'bud /' we worship and / nasta in /we seek help, and in the next verses, shows that worship, especially prayer, .is based on plural' and community

The servant must consider himself among the community even when he is standing in .front of Allah for invocation, much less during his other daily activities

Thus, from the point of view of the Qur'an, any individualism, solitariness, and the like are not accepted in Islam. Particularly, the ritual prayer, from the prayer call: /hayya 'alas-salat/ 'hasten to the prayer', which is an invitation to initiate prayer, to Sura Al-Hamd at the beginning of the prayer, and the term /assalamu 'alaykum.../ 'peace be on you all...'at the end of the prayer, all are statements of verification to the concept that this worship basically has a social aspect; viz, it ought to be performed as a congregational prayer. It is true that the prayer performed individually is also .accepted in Islam, but personal worship is considered as the secondary degree

We Ask Allah for Help in Confronting Forces

We have to confront different forces in this world, both the forces in nature and our innate, or inborn natural forces. To be able to challenge with these destructive, misleading factors, we need to be helped. Hence, we shelter under the protective umbrella of Allah. We

get up every morning and repeat the verse I'iyyaka na'budu wa 'iyyaka nasta'in / (Thee (alone) do we worship and of Thee (only) we seek help) to confess our servitude to Allah and to ask His Pure Essence help to make us successful in this great challenge. We do the same in the evening before we go to bed. We get up in the morning with His remembrance, and we go to bed in the evening with His remembrance, and each time we ask help from His Pure Essence. What an excellent state this is for the person who is in this stage of Faith! He never bows to any tyrant. He never loses himself for the attraction of material gain, and as the Qur'an reveals about the Prophet of Islam (p.b.u.h.), saying: "... Truly, my prayer and my service of sacrifice, my life and my death, are (all) for the Cherisher of the Worlds" (Sura Al-An'am No. ۶, verse ۱۶۲).

Therefore, the recitation of this Holy Sura may provide the solution to all problems in our lives. It has plenty of properties which can bring us to safety. An example is from a narration cited by one of the companions of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.). He said that in one of the battles, he was with the Messenger of Allah (p.b.u.h.). When the fight became difficult, he (p.b.u.h.) lifted his head and said: " O'Master of the Day of Judgement! Thee (alone) do we worship and of Thee (only) we seek help". At that moment the army of enemies was defeated and many of them) were killed while the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) and Muslims won.(۱)

It is stated in another narration:" When a difficulty arises for a believing servant, and he recites this Holy verse, it will become easy for him".(۲)

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اِهْـدِنَـا الصِّـراطَ الْمُسْتَقِيـمْ

"Guide us (O Lord) in the straight path".

Commentary: Verse ۶

Point

After confessing his obedience and servitude to Allah and reaching

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۱ -۱ Kanz-ul-Ummal, vol. ۴. p. ۳۶ (taken from Tafsir-i-Baqawi, and Amal-ul-Youm wal-Laylah

۲ -۲ Manhaj-us-Sadiqin, Comentary, vol. ۱, p. ۱۱۴

the state of worship, and asking for help from Him, the first thing that

the path of the the servant seeks is His guidance to the Straight Path righteous, the path of Justice, and the path of Faith and good deeds. So, he asks the Lord, Who has .bestowed on him all of these bounties, to give him the bounty of guidance', too

Such a man, in the above stated condition, is a believing one who is acquainted with the Lordship of his Lord, but it is possible, too, that suddenly he would cease to receive this bounty because of some component of wickedness, and, consequently, he would .stray from the Right Path

Therefore, he must ask his Lord, at least ten times a day, to protect him from any kind .of aberration

Moreover, this Straight Path', which is the very Divine creed, has some stages. All people are not on the same level of spiritual preparedness necessary for attaining these stages. Whatever stages a person attains, there are still some higher stages .above them that a believing servant might ask Allah to guide him to reach

?Why must we always ask Allah for guidance

Here, a question arises: "Why must we always ask Allah for guidance to the Straight ."? Path', as if we are being misguided

Besides, supposing the statement is true about us, the ordinary believers, but what about the holy Prophet and sinless Imams (p.b.u.th.) who were the examples of :complete human beings? In answer to this question, we may say

Firstly, the fact is that Man is liable to deviate from the Right Path with each step that he takes as he is walking along the path of guidance. So, he should rely on Allah and .'ask Him to keep him firm on the 'Straight Path

We must not forget that our existence, our being, and all the bounties which always :come to us, are from His Origin. To clarify the matter, we cite a simple example

(Human beings resemble an electric lamp (from one point of view

All creatures, including human beings, (from one point of view) resemble an electric lamp. We see that the light of a lamp, when it is on, appears to be constant and monotonous. The reason is that the electrical current flows constantly from a generator to the lamp. The generator continuously produces some new electrical power, a part of which reaches the lamp by some connective wires. Our being is similar

to the lamp. Although it appears as a sustained being, it is, in fact, a continually renewed being that flows ceaselessly to us from the Original Being, the Bountiful .Creator

Therefore, as the continually new being reaches us, we need constant new guidance, too. It is natural that if something wrong or some barriers manifest themselves in our spiritual connective wires with

Allah; the vices, injustice, wrong doings, etc., will disrupt our connection with the .'Origin of guidance. At that moment, we may deviate from the Straight Path

We ask Allah that these barriers be removed and not obstruct our way that we may .'remain steadfast along the Straight Path

Secondly, receiving 'guidance' is the same as travelling the path of 'development' along which man can gradually promote from lower degrees to higher and higher .ones

We also know that the path of development is endless and continues towards ."infinity

So, it is no wonder that even the prophets and sinless Imams (p.b.u.th.) ask Allah to guide them to the 'Straight Path', because the Absolute Perfection is Allah and all of us, without any exception, are on the path of perfection, then it is acceptable that .they, too, ask Him for higher promotions

Do we not often send greetings to the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) by the special formula of Salawat'? Does Salawat' not have the meaning of requesting new blessings from Allah ? (.for Prophet Mohammad and his descendants (p.b.u.th

Is it not expressed in the Qur'an regarding the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) who used to say: "... ?(O' my Lord ! advance me in knowledge ", (Sura Taha, No. ٢٠, verse ١١۴

Does the Holy Qur'an not say: " And Allah doth advance in guidance those who seek guidance..." ,(Sura Maryam, No.١٩, verse ١٩) ? And, again, does it not say: " But to those

who receive guidance, He increases the light of) Guidance, and bestows on them their ? (piety and restraint (from evil) (Sura Muhammad, No. ۴۷, verse ۱۷

This explanation makes clear the answer to the question regarding the benediction which we recite for the Prophet and the sinless Imams (p.b.u.th.) by which we beseech Allah, in fact, for a higher and better

.(.position for them all (p.b.u.th

: Here are two traditions which make the above idea clearer

Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (a.s.) commenting on the verse 'Guide us (O'Lord) on the Straight Path', says: " It means: '(O'Lord) continue bestowing Your blessings on us as You did during the days passed by which we succeeded to obey You, so that we can ,obey You in the future of our lives

(too'.(١

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) has said about the verse: " It means: '(O'Lord) show us the way which ends in Your love, leads us to Your Paradise, and prevents us from following our (destructive desires or our own wrong and destroying decisions".(٢

?'What is the Straight Path

According to what is understood from the verses of the Holy Qur'an, the 'Straight Path' is the same as the 'Monotheistic Creed'; the religion of Truth and the belief in the instructions of Allah, as Sura Al-'An'am, No. ۶, verse ۱۶۱ says: "Say: Verily, my Lord hath guided me to a way that is straight,- a religion of right, the path (trod) by "!Abraham the true in faith, and he (certainly) joined not gods with Allah

the belief aspect

Here, 'a religion of right' and 'the theistic path of Abraham (a.s.) as the true faith', in which he called on no god but Allah, are introduced as the Straight Path'. This shows .'the belief aspect

the practical aspect

But, Sura Yasin, No. ۳۶, verses ۶۰ and ۶۱ say: " Did I not enjoin on you, O'ye children of Adam, that ye should not worship Satan; for that he is to you an enemy avowed ?"" And that ye should worship Me, (for that) this is the Straight Way ?" These verses, here, point to the practical aspects of the 'religion of truth'. They urge us not to .commit any Satanic deed or any wrong action

Clinging to Allah, the Qur'an says, is the key to reaching the 'Straight Path': "... Whoever holds firmly to Allah will be shown a way that is straight", (Sura 'Al-i-Imran, (No. ٣, verse ١٠١.

It is necessary to mention this point, that the Straight

١- Bibar-ul-Anwar, vol. ١٢, p. ٢٥٤; and, Tafsir uş-Şafi, vol. ١, p. ٧٢ ١

٢- Maani-ul-Akhbar. p. ٤٨٤ ٢

Path' is always only one way, not more than that, because the shortest distance .between two points is always only one straight line

Therefore, when the Qur'an says that the Straight Path' is the very true belief in the Divine religion with its moral and practical aspects, it is because it is the shortest route to a spiritual connection with Allah

And it is also for this same reason that 'the religion of truth' is not more than one:" The Religion before Allah is Islam (submission to His Will....", (Sura 'Al-j-Imran, No. ۶, verse .(۱۵۳

Later it will be made evident that 'Islam' has a vast meaning which envelops all the monotheistic religions that were lawful at their own times but were nullified by the new one. Thus, it clarifies that all different commentaries that commentators have .cited on the matter, i.e. the Straight Path', refer, indeed, to the same thing

Islam, the Pure Unity, Qur'an, the Prophet, and his vicegerents (p.b.u.th.), are some explications that commentators have offered for the meaning of the Straight Path'. All of the stated explications refer to the Divine religion in the aspects of Faith' and !practice

Also all of the various narrations and traditions cited on the subject in the Islamic sources, each of which points to a separate dimension of the question, in substance, :refer to one essence. Some examples are as follows

It is narrated from the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) who has said: "The "Straight Path'is the (path of prophets and they are those on whom Allah hath bestowed His Grace".(۱

Here are three traditions from Imam Sadiq (a.s.), who, when commenting on this (verse, said: "It is the 'way' and the 'cognizance' of Imamate ".(۲

Again, in another tradition, he (a.s.) says : " By Allah, we (Ahlul-Bait) are the Straight (Path' ".(۳

Another tradition from the same Imam (a.s.) says: "The Straight

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۱- ۱ Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. ۱, p. ۲۰, tradition ۸۶

۲- ۲ Ibid. p. ۲۱, tradition ۸۸

۳- ۳ Ibid, tradition ۸۹

(Path 'is Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (a.s.)".(١

Ahmad-ibn-Mohammad-ibn-Ibrahim Al-Tha'labi, a Sunni scholar, has narrated from Abu-Buraydah Al-Aslami, who was one of the companions of the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.), that he said: " The Straight Path is the path of Mohammad and his (descendants ".(٢

This means that their path is based on the doctrine of Islam which consists of the belief in: 'Oneness of Allah', 'Justice', 'Prophethood', 'Imamate', and the 'Hereafter'. There is no doubt that the path of Ahlul-Bait (p.b.u.th.) is the Straight Path', and that adhering to it causes prosperity and salvation, while pursuing other than that leads to .loss and injury

Ibn-il-Maqazisi has narrated from the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) who has said: "The example of my household (Ahlul-Bait) is similar to the Ark of Noah. He who embarked it was rescued (from drowning and destruction), but, he who refused it drowned (and (perished)".(٣

Other traditions narrated from Ahlul-Bait (p.b.u.th.) also confirm the concept. In addition, the well-known tradition. Thaqalayn ' from the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.), is another good clear witness to the matter, too. It says: " I leave behind me amidst you two Great things; should you be attached to these two, never, never shall you (become astray: the Book of Allah (the Holy Quran) and my progeny, my Ahlul-Bait."(۴

As was previously stated, it is certain that the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.), Hadrat Ali-ibn-Abitalib (a.s.) and all of the other infallible Imams (a.s.) invited people to the theistic religion of Allah, an invitation to Faith and practice in truth, which elevates Man to the .climax of ability, guidance, dignity, and human excellences

By the way, it should not be neglected that there are two kinds of guidance:Divine .'Guidance' and 'Religious Guidance

Divine Guidance

Divine Guidance' is the human intelligence bestowed on a person by Allah, which'

recognizes the difference between: good and bad, right

۱- Ibid, tradition ۹۴

۲- Bihar-ul-Anwar, vol. ۲۴, p. ۱۶ and Manhaj-us-Sadiqin, vol. ۱, p. ۱۱۶

۳- Bihar-ul-Anwar, vol. ۲۳, p. ۱۲۴, tradition ۵۰

۴- Ihqaq-ul-Haqq, vol. ۹, pp. ۳۰۹-۳۷۵

and wrong, gain and loss, felicity and wretchedness, virtue and vice, and so on. It is, in .fact, the inner messenger of a person

Religious Guidance

Religious Guidance means that Allah sends prophets, Divine Books and legislation to guide Man to all merits of this world and the next, as well as making him aware of the injuries and damages of the two worlds. Of course, when Man is guided by the above guidance and acts accordingly, he will be worthy of receiving the blessings of the next world; this is made possible through the development of the soul by acquiring knowledge, good habits, and commendable moral qualities in which state he will certainly attain the happiness of this world and that of the next, together with the .infinite grace of Allah

Intellect' is called a 'guide in that it enlightens man as to what is right and what is' wrong. The Prophets (p.b.u.th.), Imams (a.s.), and scholars are called 'Guides, too, because they guide the human race to the salvation and felicity in both worlds. But, really, Allah is the main Supreme Guide, and these are the means appointed for the .guidance of Man

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صراط الذين أنعمت عليهم غير المغضوب عليهم

ولاالضالين

The path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed Thy bounties, not (the path) of" ,those inflicted with Thy wrath

".nor (of those) gone astray

Commentary : Verse ٧

Two Paths of Deviation

This verse is, indeed, a clear illustration of the Straight Path' which was dealt with in

the previous verse. It says that the person asks

Allah to guide him onto the path of those on whom He has blessed with many kinds of bounties; (such as the blessings of guidance, success, the leadership of people of truth, knowledge, good actions, holy

wars and martyrdom); not those who deserved His wrath because of their wrong doings, nor those who neglected the right path and went astray. "The path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed Thy bounties, not (the path) of those inflicted with ".Thy wrath, nor (of those) gone astray

In fact, we are not familiar with the method of guidance, so the Lord's command, in this verse, is that we ask for the path of the prophets, good doers and all of those to .whom Allah has extended His bounties, blessings and favours

It also warns us that there are two deviated paths in front of us: the path of those .inflicted with His wrath, and the path of those gone astray

:Explanation

?'Who are those upon whom Allah has bestowed His bounties .۱

Sura An-Nisa, No. ۴, verse ۶۹ has introduced these people, thus: " All who obey Allah and the Apostle are in the company of those on whom is the Grace of Allah,- of the prophets (who teach), the Sincere (lovers of Truth), the Witnesses (who testify), and "! the Righteous (who do good): Ah ! What a beautiful Fellowship

As it demonstrates, this verse introduces the people on whom the bounties and Mercy of Allah are bestowed. They are four groups: the Prophets, the Sincere, the .Witnesses, and the Righteous

These four states may refer to an idea that: for the attainment of a sound, progressive and faithful society, prophets and Divine leaders should form the .foundation

After the prophets are the sincere truthful missionaries and preachers whose words attest to their actions by which they are able to extend the prophets' missions .throughout their societies

Following this period of the formation of these structural states, naturally, some evil-minded individuals, who serve as barriers on the path of truth, may appear in the way.

There should be some others to stand against them. In this struggle a few of these defenders of truth may be gifted with martyrdom, whose blood would then water the .tree of Theism

p:۶۲

The fruit of these struggles and devotions is yielded as the Righteous' with whom the .society can be pure, efficient, and abounding with spirituality

Therefore, in the Holy Sura Al-Fatihah (The Opening), we are encouraged to repeatedly ask Allah, during the day and night, that we be led on the path of these previously mentioned four groups, and, obviously at each time, we must emphasize with sincere effort and endeavour, on one of these four states more than the others .in order to perform our duty and mission well

? Who are the Last Two Groups in this Verse .۲

Point

The separation of these two groups from each other indicates that each group has .some defining characteristics

:To make distinction between these two groups, there are three commentaries

Commentary A

A) From the application of these two words in the Qur'an, it is so understood that /magdubi 'alayhim/ those inflicted with Lis Wrath' are in a worse condition than /dallin/ those gone astray'. in Owc, words, 'those gone astray' are the ordinary misguided and /magdubi 'alayhim/ 'those inflicted with His Wrath' are the misguided who are obstinate or hypocritical. And, for these two very reasons, the Curse and Wrath of Allah have been cited towards them in frequent occurrences in the Qur'an. The : followings are some instances

But such as open their breast to Unbelief, - on them is Wrath from Allah, ...", (Sura ..." .(An-Nahl, No. ۱۶, verse ۱۰۶

And that He may punish the Hypocrites, men and women, and Polytheists, men and" women, who imagine an evil opinion of Allah. On them is a round of Evil; the Wrath of Allah is on them. He has cursed them and got Hell ready for them: and evil is it for a .(destination ", (Sura Al-Fath No. ۴۸, verse ۶

However, this group, ie. 'those inflicted with His Wrath were those who, besides their unbelief, pursued the path of obstinacy and enmity against Allah, and whenever they could, they even injured the Divine leaders and prophets (p.b.u.th.). As Sura 'Al-۱-'Imran, No. ۳, verse ۱۱۲ says: "...They draw on themselves Wrath from Allah, and pitched over them is (the tent of destitution. This because they rejected the

Signs of Allah, and slew the Prophets in defiance of right; this because they rebelled ."and transgressed beyond bounds

Commentary B

B) Some of the commentators believe that /dallin/ 'those gone astray' refers to the misguided of the Christians; and /maqdabi 'alayhim/ 'those inflicted with His Wrath' .refers to the misguided of the Jews

This idea was formed because of the particular responses that these two groups showed in reply to the invitation to Islam. For, as the Qur'an has clearly pointed out in different verses, the misguided Jews used to show a special grudge and enmity against the invitation of Islam, though, at the beginning, their scholars and learned men were the bearers of the glad tidings of Islam. Very soon, though, under the effect of deviation of thought, belief and notion, and, also, because their financial gains were being endangered, they became the most obstinate enemies of Islam and they did whatever evil they could against the progression of Islam and Muslims. (Even today, Zionism and Zionists hold the same position regarding the manner in which they treat (.Islam and Muslims

Therefore, to render these people as 'those inflicted with His Wrath 'seems very .correct

But, the misguided of the Christians, who upon encountering with Islam were not so grudging, but were misled because of their misperception of the Divine religion and therefore refusing the Truth, were rendered into / dallin /' those gone astray. They believed in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost instead of clinging to true Monotheism, the worship of Allah. This is, in itself, one of the greatest examples of ."astray' and 'aberration

In the Islamic traditions, too, / magdabi 'alayhim/' those inflicted with His Wrath are interpreted as the Jews, and / dallin /' those gone astray' as the misguided of the Christians. The foundation of this interpretation is the same as was mentioned in the .above

C) It is also probable that /dallin/ 'those gone astray' refers to those who are misguided but do not insist on making others go astray, while / maqdabi 'alayhim/' those inflicted with His Wrath' refer to those who both 'go astray' and ' lead others .astray'. They try vigorously to change others to become like themselves

The references to this meaning are the verses that introduce the

persons who obstruct the way of guidance of others and are mentioned in the Holy Qur'an as 'those who would hinder (men) from the Path of Allah. Sura Ash-Shura, No. ۴۲. verse ۱۶ says: " But those who dispute concerning Allah after He has been accepted, - futile is their dispute in the sight of their Lord: on them is Wrath,and for them will be Penalty terrible."

Other traditions have also been cited concerning the matter, including a narration from Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (a.s.). It says: "Everyone who has disbelieved in Allah, on him is Wrath, and he is astray

from His Path".(۱)

In 'Ma'ani', a book of traditions, it is narrated from the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) who said: " Shi'ah (the followers) of Ali (a.s.) are those on whom Allah has bestowed the bounty of Wilāyat, love of Ali-ibn-Abutalib (a.s.); His Wrath is not on them, and they are not on the wrong path".(۲)

Supplication:

O'Lord! Count us not among those inflicted with Your Wrath' and 'those gone astray', but consider us among true believers, the followers of the school of Ahlul-Bait (a.s).

O'Lord! Guide us on the Straight Path in our every circumstance and in all our affairs!

O'Lord! We thank you for this Divine blessing and say: "Praise belongs to Allah (alone) Who set us among those holding steadfast to the love of Ali-ibn-Abitalib and the other immaculate Imams (a.s.)".

The End

۱- ۱ Tafsir-us-Sai, vol. ۱, p. ۷۴

۲- ۲ Ma'ani-ul-Akhbar, p. ۳۲, tradition ۸; and, Tafsir Furat-ul-Kufi, vol. ۱. p. ۵۲

(Sura Al-Fatihah (The Opening

بِسْمِ اللّهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحيْم

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

Sura Al–Baqarah (The Cow) No.۲

Point

(Verses ۲۸۶)

Contents of the Sura

Point

This Sura contains ۲۸۶ verses, rendering it the longest Sura in the Holy Qur'ān. It is indisputable that this Sura was not revealed all at once, but partially and in increments as necessitated by the various Islamic social circumstances and conditions found at different times in Medina. But, the fact is that the inclusiveness of this Sura from the point of Islamic doctrine in Faith and many practical issues (social, political, economical, and religious) is not deniable, for, there are various subjects discussed in :it, including the followings

various subjects discussed

There are some discussions about Monotheism and gaining knowledge of Allah, .۱ .especially by way of studying the mysteries of creation

There are many statements about the Resurrection and life after death with a few .۲ tangible examples, like the story of Abraham (a.s.) and how the birds became restored to life, and the

.story of Ezra

There are some facts about the inimitability of the Qur'ān and the significance of .۳ .this Heavenly Book

۴. There are long discussions and explanations concerning the Jews and hypocrites and their peculiar positions against Islam and the Qur'ān, evidenced by their various mischievous hindrances

against them.

۵. There are some narrations about the history of the Great Prophets, including Abraham (a.s.) and Moses (a.s.) in particular.

۶. There are some passages that contain a few Islamic rules

related to varying subjects, such as : prayers, fasting, Holy War on the path of Allah, the pilgrimage to Mecca, the change of the Qiblah (the direction of prayer) from Jerusalem to Mecca, marriage and divorce,

commerce, debt, and a great many of the ordinances concerning usury. Donation for the sake of Allah, is abundantly discussed. The problem of retaliation, the banning of different kinds of forbidden meat, and also gambling and wine drinking are discussed, in addition to a few other ordinances related to the subjects of writing wills, testaments, and the like.

The appellation ` Al-Baqarah ' (the Cow), the title of this Sura, is taken from the story of the Israelites' Cow, mentioned in verses ۶۷ to ۷۳ of this Sura, whose description will be explained later in this very commentary (on pages ۲۰۸ to ۲۱۳).

The Virtue of Studying this Sura:

Point

There are some significant traditions and narrations on the virtue of studying this Sura, cited in Islamic literature, including the followings: The Late Ṭabarsī has so cited in Majma`-ul-Bayān that once the

Prophet (p.b.u.h.) was asked : " Which Sura of the Qur'ān is the best ? "He (p.b.u.h.) answered : " Al-Baqarah ". They asked : " Which verse of the Sura (is the best) ? " He replied : " 'Āyat-ul-Kursī, the ` Verse of the Throne ', (verse ۲۵۵)". (۱)

The superiority of this Holy Sura is, apparently, due to its comprehensiveness, and the preference of the ` Verse of the Throne ' (verse ۲۵۵) is because of its special monotheistic content, which will be dealt with later in this commentary. It is not contrary to the fact that some other Suras of the Qur'ān are considered superior in other aspects. All the Suras of the Qur'ān have been considered from different points of view. Again, it is narrated by Alī-ibn-il-Ḥusayn (a.s.) that the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said : " He who recites the first four verses of Sura Al-Baqarah, the `Verse of Throne' (verse ۲۵۵) with its next two verses (۲۵۶,۲۵۷) together

Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. ۱, p. ۲۶; and Majma'-ul-Bayan, vol. ۱, p. ۳۲ ۱ -۱

with the last three verses of the Sura, will not meet any trouble in himself, in his family members, and in his wealth; and Satan will not approach him, and he (having paid attention to the Qur'ān in his life) will not forget the Qur'ān".(۱)

Also, ` Ubayy-ibn-i-ka`b quotes from the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.)

thus : " He who recites this Sura (Al-Baqarah) will be encompassed by the bounties of Allah and His Mercy; and He will reward him as much as that of a person who has fought fearlessly on the path of Allah for one year". (۲)

Then, the Messenger of Allah (p.b.u.h.) added that Muslims should study this Sura, know it, and do it accordingly in order to be benefited by the Mercy of Allah in this world and the next.

Imam Ja`far Ṣādiq (a.s.) is narrated to have said : " He who recites Al-Baqarah and 'Āl-i-`Imrān, these two Suras will come above his head on the Day of Judgement like two clouds similar to two umbrellas, (and will protect him from the heat of That Day) ".(۳)

Every Virtue Closely Corresponds with the Contents

Here, it is necessary to mention the important fact that those rewards, virtues and significant compensations that have been cited for studying the Qur'ān or some special Suras and verses of the Qur'ān never meant that one simply should be contented with the fact that one has recited them as invocations.

On the contrary, the recitation of the Qur'ān is for understanding, and understanding is for contemplation, and contemplation is for action.

As a matter of fact, every virtue, which is mentioned for a Sura or a verse, corresponds very much with the contents of that Sura or verse.

For example, among the virtues of reciting Sura An-Nūr, No. ۲۴, we see that it says that Allah may protect the person and his children from committing adultery and slander when he perseveres in studying it.

This consequence is because the contents of Sura An-Nūr contains some important instructions on resisting sexual deviations; i.e. the instructions advising single persons to hasten to marriage; the instructions about ` cover ' (ḥijāb); the instructions about refraining from ogling and desirous looks; the instruction that forbids spreading any

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۱- Thawab-ul-A'mal (according to the citation of Nur-uth-Thaqalayn vol. ۱, p. ۳۶۱).

۲- Manhaj-us-Sadiqin, vol. ۱, p. ۱۲۰; and Majma'-ul-Bayān, vol. ۱, p. ۳۲۲

۳- Al-Burhan Fi Tafsir-il-Qur'an, vol. ۱, p. ۵۲۳

rumours and accusations about others; and, finally, the instruction on executing the punishment for fornication and adultery upon any perpetrators : be they men or .women

It is obvious that when the content of this Sura be observed by the members of a society or a family, the iniquity of adultery will not appear therein. It is the same ,concerning the verses of Sura Al-Baqarah

mentioned above. They are all related to the subject of Monotheism, belief in ` Qayb ' (the Invisible), knowing Allah, and resisting evil temptations. So, if a person recites them and observes the instructions in them carefully and from the depths of his soul, .he will certainly obtain those virtues

It is certainly true, however, that the recitation of the Qur'ān deserves rewards, but, besides the original and essential rewards given by Allah, its effects on personal behavior will exist only when this

.recitation is a premise for contemplation and action

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

Sura Al–Baqarah (The Cow) No.٢

Verses ١–٥), Arabic)

بِسْمِ اللّهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحيمِ

١ الم

٢ ذلِکَ الْکِتابُ لا رَیْبَ فیهِ هُدًی لِلْمُتَّقینَ

٣ الَّذینَ یُؤْمِنونَ بِالْغَیْبِ وَ یُقیمُونَ الصَّلوهَ وَ مِمّا رَزَقْناهُمْ یُنْفِقُونَ

٤ وَالَّذینَ یُؤْمِنونَ بِما اُنْزِلَ اِلَیْکَ وَ ما اُنْزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلِکَ وَبِالْاخِرهِ هُمْ یُوقِنُونَ

٥ اُول-ئِکَ عَلی هُدًی مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَ اُول-ئِکَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

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p:٧٠

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحيْم

Sura Al-Baqarah

(The Cow)

English Translation

(No. ۲ (Verses ۱-۵

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

".'Alif `A', Lām `L', Mīm `M' " .۱

",This is the (True) Book wherein is no doubt, a guidance to the pious ones " .۲

Who believe in the Unseen and keep up prayer and spend(in charity) of what We " .۳
".have provided them

And who believe in what has been revealed to you (Muhammad), and what has " .۴
been sent down (to other apostles) before you; and of the Hereafter they are
".certain

They are on (true) guidance from their Lord; and they are the ones who are the " .۵
".successful

ال-م

".'Alif `A', Lām `L', Mīm `M' "

Commentary: Verse ۱

The Abbreviated Letters of the Qur'ān

At the beginning of ۲۹ Suras of the Holy Qur'ān, there are several certain abbreviated letters, the Muqatta`āt, which seem separate from each other; i.e. they do not form an apparently meaningful word, but wherever they occur, in the Qur'ān, the Sura follows immediately with some expressions about the Qur'ān and its importance. This

in itself indicates that there is a relation between these letters and the origin of the Qur'ān. As an example, Sura An-Naml, No. ٢٧, verses ١-٢ say :

Ṭā. Sīn. These are verses of the Qur'ān, a Book that makes (things) clear." There are," .also, many other examples, similar to this one, in the Qur'ān

The abbreviated letters of the Holy Qur'ān have always been considered mysterious. In the words of scholars and commentators, the letters that are prefixes to some Suras, such as 'Alif `A', Lām `L', Mīm `M', and the like, are among the `metaphorical expressions' of the Qur'ān. They are secrets that none knows except the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) and, after him, his successors (a.s.) who have left some traditions and : narrations which testify to this very matter

Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (a.s.) said : " Every book has an elite and the elite of this Book .١ ((The Qur'ān) is the `abbreviated letters'. "(١

It is narrated from Imam Ṣādiq (a.s.) who said : " 'Alif `A', Lām`L', Mīm `M', are the .٢ letters among the (whole) letters of the ` Exalted Name ' of Allah, which are separated and scattered in the Qur'ān and whenever the Prophet and the sinless (Imams (p.b.u.th.) call Allah by that `Exalted Name', their prayer will be accepted."(٢

It is narrated from Imam Ali-ibn-il-Ḥusayn (a.s.), thus : " The Quraysh and the Jews .٣ refuted the Qur'ān and said: ` It is mere magic and he has made it by himself '. So, Allah said: ` 'Alif, Lām, Mīm. This is the (True) Book...', i.e. ` O' Muhammad, this Book that is sent down to you, is made up of the abbreviated letters and 'Alif, Lām, Mīm are among them. They are the same as the letters of the alphabet that you (people) use in (your words. Bring similar to it if you are genuine '." (٣

It is narrated from Ibn-Abbas and `Akramah who have said that these letters are .۴ .the `letters of oath', as well as `the Name of Allah', by which He (s.w.t.) has sworn

The reason why Allah has sworn by these letters is, perhaps, for their importance and greatness through which the Glory and Highness of Allah and the secrets of the world of creation are stated. All sciences, from the beginning to the end, daily activities and arrangements of affairs in societies and their communications

Tafsir-us-Şafi, vol. ۱, p. ۷۸ ۱ -۱

Makhzan-ul-'Irfan, commentary, vol. ۱, p. ۶۶ ۲ -۲

Al-Burhan, commentary, vol. ۱, p. ۵۴ ۳ -۳

throughout the world, the development of industries, the trading and commercial activity between people, their marriages, the social laws, regulations, and the jurisprudence of the religions of human beings, all in all, depend on the letters of the alphabet. The transmission of ancient civilizations and cultures from old generations to the later ones has been possible only through transcribing and recording them essentially with the help of the bounty of alphabets. Even this very commentary book, which is the statement of the Divine laws and the description of the Qur'ānic concepts, is being published and distributed throughout the world in different languages including the English language, because of the existence of the letters of the alphabet. Furthermore, an oath is usually taken to an important and great subject. These abbreviated letters have such an importance and greatness. Hence, Allah, the Exalted, taking an oath to a letter of the alphabet, says : " Nūn. By the Pen and by the (Record) which (men) write," (Sura

.(Al-Qalam, No. ۶۸, verse ۱

However, there are more than one hundred other traditions on the abbreviated letters of the Qur'ān cited by Muslim scholars in many authentic commentary and tradition books. Another aspect is that some eminent men have said that these letters refer to the idea that this heavenly Book, with such splendour and reputation that it stirs wonder in the great speakers, both Arab and non-Arab, and that has made the men of letters and all others unable to challenge it, is composed of the sort of the very alphabetical letters that are within the reach of everyone. This fact shows that the Qur'ān has not been produced by the mind of Man, but it is an absolute revelation and, therefore, none can produce the like of it. Imam Ali-ibn-Musā-ar-Ridā (a.s.) is narrated to have said in a tradition : " Verily, Allah has sent down this Qur'ān narrated by the very letters that all Arabs apply ordinarily ". And, thus, Allah, Glory be to Him and Highly Exalted is He, says : " Say, `If the whole of mankind and Jinns were to gather together to produce the like of this Qur'ān, they could not produce the like thereof, even if they backed up each other with help and

.(support ", (Sura Al-Asrā' , No. ۱۷, verse ۸۸

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ذٰلِكَ الْكِتابُ لا رَيْبَ فيهِ هُدًى لِلْمُتَّقينَ

This is the (True) Book wherein is no doubt, a guidance "

",to the pious ones

Commentary : Verse ۲

Following the abbreviated letters, the Sura, referring to the importance of this : heavenly Book, says

This is the (True) Book wherein is no doubt, ..." This meaning may point to the idea " that Allah promised His prophet (p.b.u.h.) to send down to him a Book for the guidance of men and now it was done. For, it is a Book wherein is a source of guidance for all truth-seekers, and, these believers, in fact, have no doubt in it. The Qur'ān says that there is no doubt in this Book, and this statement is not a mere claim. It means that the content of the Qur'ān has such a style that it, in itself, attests to the authenticity of itself. In other words, the signs of truthfulness, greatness, and firmness together with the depth and synthesis of meanings, the sweetness and elegancy of the words and its stylistic form found in the statements are so evident that no doubt or temptation can interfere and every truth-seeker reaches the limits of certitude. It is interesting that over the course of time not only the freshness of the Holy Qur'ān does not decrease, but, with the progress of science and the secrets of created things being uncovered, the facts of the Holy Qur'ān become more manifest. As the international standards of development, science, and industry are raised, the luminosity and .resplendence of these verses become more evident

This is not only a claim but it is a reality that will be dealt with in this very commentary .book, Allah-Willing

:Explanation

? What is Guidance .١

Point

The term ` guidance ' is utilized in many occurrences in the Qur'ān. In all these cases the root meaning of the word refers to two main guidances : Divine Guidance and .Religious Guidance

Divine Guidance

Point

A) Divine Guidance is the guidance that exists in all creatures of the world. (In other words, `Divine Guidance' means the leadership of Allah upon creatures under the regulation of creation governed by some definite laws and secrets of the world of existen

Characteristics of Two Groups Who Lack in Faith

It can also be said that those who are in lack of Faith are characterized in two groups. The members of the first group are those who generally seek for the truth and hold .enough piety in their souls so that wherever they confront the truth they accept it

The second group are some obstinate, fanatical, lustful people that not only do not seek for the truth but wherever they find it, they try to blow out its light. It is certain that the Qur'ān, or any other heavenly Book, has always been beneficial for the first group, but the second group does not take any advantage from it. Hence, the Qur'ān says : " And We send down (stage by stage) of the Qur'ān that which is healing and a mercy unto the believers, but it adds not to the unjust but perdition ", (Sura Al-Asrā', .(No. ١٧, verse ٨٢

However, it is a fact that saline soil does not grow flowers such as hyacinth though it

rains a thousand times on it. But, if the land is ploughed, fertilized and prepared for planting, the life-giving droplets of rain will be useful for it.

The land of the self of man is similar to this parable. It should be empty of obstinacy and enmity, otherwise, the seed of guidance will not grow in it. So, Allah qualifies the Qur'ān as: "(The Qur'ān is) a guidance to the pious ones."

Religious Guidance

B) ` Religious Guidance ' is introduced by prophets and Divine Books. It is through their teaching and training that men can progress on the path of development. The references to this fact are found abundantly in the Holy Qur'ān, including the verse that says : " And We made them Leaders guiding (men) by Our Command...", (Sura Al-Anbiyā, No. ٢١, verse ٧٣).

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Why is Guidance Particular to the Pious Ones ?

٢. Why is Guidance Particular to the Pious Ones ? It is certain that the Qur'ān was sent down for the guidance of all human beings. So, the question is that why the guidance is introduced as particular to the ` pious ones'.

The reason is that it is impossible for Man to take benefit from the guidance of the Divine Books unless he attains some degrees of submission and kindles the light of piety in his self.

Piety in Lexicon and Religion

The term / taqwā /, philologically, is derived from / wiqāyah / ` to protect from what harms '. Allah, the Exalted, says : "... save yourselves and your families from a fire...", (Sura At-Taḥrīm, No. ۶۶, verse ۶). Then, piety, in this sense, is ` the protection of oneself from what one fears'.

And, in religion, the pious are ` people who preserve their selves from what harms them in the Hereafter '.

The Stages of Piety

First Stage

There are some stages of piety.

The first stage is to avoid and restrain from committing sins and wrong doings; as it is

narrated from the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) that none reaches (this stage of) piety unless he avoids unlawful things. (1)

In a tradition from the Prophet (p.b.u.h), deeds of people are divided into three kinds : 1) Those that are clearly lawful, whose

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1- Makhzan-ul-Irfan,vol.1 p.81

lawfulness is vividly apparent. ٢) Those that are clearly unlawful, whose unlawfulness is certain. ٣) Some dubious things that are situated between these two. They are lawful but resemble the unlawful. The person who avoids even the dubious things will (never approach the unlawful ones.(١

Hadrat Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (a.s) is narrated to have said : "A pious person is he whose deeds would not include anything shameful if they are put in a tray and (displayed it around the world (to show them) ". (٢

Second Stage

The second stage of piety is the full obedience to what is revealed to the Prophet (p.b.u.h.). Thus, piety consists of performing obligatory things (Wājibāt) and avoiding .the unlawful things

Third Stage

The third stage of piety is to rid the heart and soul of everything save Allah. In this sense, a pious person is one who strains out from his wishes, those that are not pleasing to Allah, and relies not on individuals but on Him only; viz, he forsakes from hoping in every other being and hopes only in Him; he focuses his view on observing the Beauty and Glory of His Lordship. This is real piety; so the Qur'ān says: " O' you who believe! Be careful of (your duty to) Allah with the care which is due to Him...", .((Sura 'Āl-i-`Imrān, No. ٣, verse ١٠٢

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Bihar-ll-Anwar, vol. ٢, p. ٢٢١ ١ -١

Makhzan-l-Ifan, vol. ١, p. ٨٢ ٢ -٢

الَّذينَ يُؤْمِنونَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَ يُقيمُونَ الصَّلوةَ وَ مِمّ-ا رَزَقْن-اهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ

Who believe in the Unseen and keep up prayer and spend "

".in charity) of what We have provided them)

Commentary : Verse ۳

The Effects of Piety on Man's Spirit and Body

Regarding the Faith and practices in Islam, the Qur'ān, at the beginning of this Sura, :divides people into three different categories

.The pious ones (Muttaqīn), who accept Islam in all aspects .۱

Unbelievers, who are in the exact opposite state as compared to the first group. .۲ They confess their infidelity and do not refrain from expressing hatred and acting .hostilely against Islam

The hypocrites, who portray contradictory features. They show themselves . ۳ Muslims when they are with Muslims, but they behave hostilely towards Muslims when they are with the enemies of Islam. Their main fundamental features are, in .fact, the very infidelity of theirs, but they simulate affection for Islam, too

Undoubtedly, the harm of this group, for Islam, is greater than the second group. Hence, the Qur'ān, concerning them, is more severe. This quality, of course, is found not only in Islam but also in all ideological schools of the world. Their members are either faithful to the doctrine of that school, or are clearly opposed to it, or they are conservative hypocrites. Furthermore, this proposition does not refer only to a .specific time, it has always existed in all ages of the human world

The Pious Ones, the First Group

Point

The verses under discussion deal with the first group. These verses explain the special characteristics of the pious ones from the point of view of Faith and practice in

five matters: Faith in the Unseen, establishment of prayer, spending in charity from all of the divine merits they possess, belief in the invitation of all prophets, and Faith in the

.Resurrection Day

: Faith in the Unseen .۱

."...At first, the verse describes the pious ones as those : " Who believe in the Unseen

The world of the Unseen ' and ` the world of the senses ' are two concepts opposite ` each other. ` The world of the senses ' is the visible and physical world, while ` the world of the Unseen ' is a world beyond our senses. Therefore, the term /qayb/ is used ` for that which is concealed from us '. The Qur'ān says : "...the Knower of the unseen ,and the seen; He is the Beneficent, the Merciful", (Sura Al-Ḥashr, No. ۵۹

.(verse ۲۲

Faith in the Unseen ' is just the first characteristic that separates the believers from ` unbelievers. Thus, the believers in heavenly religions contrast with the deniers of God, revelation, and Resurrection. It is for this very reason that ` Faith in the Unseen ' has .'been mentioned as the first characteristic of ` the pious ones

The believers have cleft the limits of the world of ` materiality' and freed themselves from their restrictions. They have stepped into a quite vast open world and, with this broad scope of view that they have obtained, they have connected themselves with the realm of an extraordinary, bigger, and greater world. But, the contrary group insists on confining Man, as an animal, inside the walls of the world of materialism. They call this retrogression, which is a kind of life filled with lusts and excessive luxuries, an advanced civilized life. Comparing the concepts and doctrines of these two groups, we conclude that the ` pious ones' believe in ` the Unseen', a world very much wider and bigger than what can be seen or touched with the external senses in the world of existence. The Creator of this universe is Omniscient and Omnipotent, Who has infinite Glory and Insight. He is Eternal and has no end. He has planned the .world in a good, regular, and precise design

In the world of believing men, the spirit of Man has produced a great distance between humans and animals. For them, death does not mean an end. On the

contrary, it is one of the stages of progression

towards man's development. Death is an opening to a broader and greater world. Whereas, a materialist believes that the world of being is restricted to what we can see. He says that natural science has proved that the rules of nature are a chain of obligatory rules by which, without any designs or special programs, this world has been fashioned. They believe productive power of the world has no intellect even as little as that of a child. And, Man is a part of nature, i.e., when he dies everything ends. His corpse is decomposed in a few days and joins with nature again as a natural component. They conclude that there is no life after death for Man, and there is no .difference between Man and animal

Are these two people with these two different methods of thinking comparable with ? each other ? Are their actions and behaviours in the society the same

The first one cannot ignore that which is right, just and benevolent, and helping other fellow members. But the second does not see any reason for any of these matters. He cares for only what is effective and beneficial in his physical life at present or in the future. That is why that, in the lives of truthful believing people, there is purity, brotherhood, mutual understanding, and cooperation; while in the lives governed by materialism, colonialism, exploitation, plunder and murder are seen. Therefore, the Holy Qur'ān, in the above mentioned verses, considers ` Faith in the Unseen ' the first .stage of piety

Opinions are divided among the commentators as to whether Faith in the Unseen, here, points to Faith in Monotheism, or to a vast meaning that covers Faith in the world of revelation, Resurrection, angels and, in general, what is beyond the external .senses

We already pointed out that Faith in ` the world of beyond the external senses ' is the first phase of separation of the believers from unbelievers. This makes it clear that the term ` Unseen ', here, contains the same vast meaning as the term that was pointed out. Moreover, the application of the word in this verse is absolute and unrestricted. There is nothing included in the verse that would confine its meaning to .a specific one

In some traditions from Ahlul-Bait (a.s.) (١) , the term ` Unseen ', in the verse under discussion, is rendered to the `١٢th Imam (a.s.)', who, as we believe,is alive right now but is concealed from the eyes of people. This idea does not contrast with what was said in the above, because it is one of the aspects of ` Unseen ', too. And, in other words, ` Unseen ' is something which is not possible to be seen or heard by our external senses, such as sight or hearing or things outside the grasp of our other senses. The Existence of Allah is apparently hidden because of the limit of our external senses. The Hereafter, the status of the next world, is concealed from our eyes. In this gloomy time in which we live, the presence of prophets and our sinless Imams (p.b.u.th.) are necessary for us, but, even our Expected Imam (a.s.) whom we need to be our guide out in front of us, whose light of mastership, which would help us follow along this dim, murky, dangerous road that lies before us upon which we must travel until we reach the sound abode of ours, is absent from us. Apparently, he is out of our reach. Though, he, the esteemed one (a.s.), is never heedless of his true followers and he is always aware of their circumstances. (There will be a more comprehensive discussion concerning the ` ١٢th Imam (a.s.) ' later in the (.commentary

This statement shows that at this time, which is the worst of the ages, how high the position of the persons with complete Faith is! And, as it is narrated, there is reason for the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) to say about them : " How much I am eager to see my (brothers (who will come to being) in `the end of time'! ". (٢

We may consider that the Prophet (p.b.u.h.), with such high rank and glory, has expressed his eagerness for seeing the true believers of this time, and has introduced .'them as his `brothers

: Relationship with Allah .٢

Point

Another speciality of the `pious ones' mentioned in the Qur'ān is their prayers. Prayer, which is the key to communion with Allah, holds the

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۱- Nu-uth-Thaqalayn, vol.۱, p.۳۱ ۱

۲- Makhzan-ul-Irfan, vol.۱, p.۹۹ ۲

believers in permanent and perpetual contact with that great Origin of Creation. They have found the way to the world beyond this world, viz, the world of the supernatural. They bow only to Allah and submit only to the Great Creator of the World of Being. That is why there is no place for submission or surrender to any tyrants and .oppressors in their agenda

Such a human feels that he has been promoted to a situation higher than that of all other creatures for that he has the honour of standing in front of Allah and is worthy .of speaking directly with Him. This status is the greatest factor necessary for training

The person who, with his whole heart and mind, stands in front of Allah, at least five times a day, and sincerely utters invocation, his thoughts, his actions and his speech altogether will become divine. How is it possible that a person like that could do ? anything against Allah's pleasure

The Excellence and Importance of Prayer

Prayer is the pillar of Faith, the means of attaining nearness to Allah, the expression of obedience to Him, the thanksgiving for His infinite Mercy, the imitation of the examples of the holy Prophet and immaculate Imams (p.b.u.th.), the strong link between a person and Allah, and the constant means of seeking and receiving His Guidance and Assistance and avoiding errors and evil. Prayer is the only way in which faith, that lives in the heart, can be made manifest in our actions, and can ensure admission to the realm of everlasting happiness in our life in this world as well as the .life in the next world

There are many verses in the Holy Qur'ān and plenty of traditions in Islamic literature on the importance and virtue of prayer. Intellectual and religious considerations .approve its excellence, too

words of the Late Ṣāḥib Jawāhir

Here, we narrate the words of the Late Ṣāḥib Jawāhir cited in ` Jawāhir-ul-Kalām ',

vol. ٧, page ١. The words and ideas are based on the contents of the verses of the :Qur'ān and some authentic traditions

Prayer is an action that prevents the performance of hideous indecent deeds. This " status causes the Fire of Hell to extinguish, and any pure believer to be linked with ,Allah by which he can make, spiritually

progress. Just as the water of a stream washes away dirt from the body, prayer washes away the sins of believers; and, its repetition five times a day is similar to washing the body in that stream repeatedly. Allah told Jesus (a.s.), and other prophets (p.b.u.th.) as well, to pray throughout their lives ". " However, prayer is the basis of Islam and it is the best deed and the best subject (which is legislated by the religion). It is the standard and criterion of other deeds of people. Thus, when a person has performed the prayer completely, the reward of all other of his deeds is complete, because all of his good deeds are accepted. Therefore, prayer, comparing with other religious practices, even the religion itself, is considered as a pillar similar to the central pole of a tent. For this reason the first deed of a mortal, which will be questioned about in the next life and will be discussed, is `prayer'. If prayer is accepted from a person, other (good) deeds of his lifetime will be evaluated and accepted from him. But, if it is refused, his other deeds will not be looked at and will be refused and returned to him. So, regarding this, it is not surprising if an abandoner of prayer is called an ` unbeliever '. Yes, it is certainly so when the reason of its abandonment is especially for the scorning of the religion. Prayer is something that Imam Ṣādiq (a.s.) did not know anything better or higher and more beloved than that with Allah. Even, he (a.s.) has said that these five daily canonical prayers are obligatory. He who establishes them and observes them at their proper times, will meet Allah on the Judgement Day, and He holds a covenant stating that because of this he will enter Paradise. But, he who does not keep up these obligatory prayers and does not observe them at their proper times, then, it will be up to Allah whether to forgive him or to punish him. And, the obligatory prayer is better than twenty Hajj-performances, each of which is better than a room full of gold that would completely be paid as donation in the way of Allah. Or, the obligatory prayer is better than one thousand Hajj-performances, every one of them being better than the whole world with all its contents. Verily, obedience to Allah is service to Him on the earth, and no service is comparable with prayer. That was why the angels called Zachariah (a.s.) while he was praying in his sanctuary. When a person is preparing for saying prayer, the Divine favours come down from heaven to him on the earth and some angels surround him. An angel proclaims that if this prayerful believer knew what existed in the prayer, he

"... would never neglect it

Ḥadrat Ridā, the ٨th holy Imam (a.s.), wrote as an answer to the problems of " Muhammad-ibn-Sanān that the reason of (the importance of) prayer is that it is the confession to the Lordship of Allah, Almighty and Glorious, and lack of attributing partners to Him. Prayer means to stand in front of the Almighty, Glory be to His ,Majesty, in a manner of humility

abasement and wretchness and to seek forgiveness for the sins committed. In prayer, a servant puts his head down on the soil several times a day in order to glorify Allah, Almighty and Glorious, and to furnish His remembrance all the time. To stand in the presence of Allah in prayer, causes a believing person to avoid evils, and it hinders (him from all kinds of sin and corruption."(١

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: Relationship with People .٣

Besides the constant communion with Allah, the pious ones have a close and permanent relationship with people, the creatures of Allah. For this very reason, the Holy Qur'ān introduces their third characteristic in this verse as thus : "(They) spend ."(in charity) of what We have provided them

It is noteworthy that the Qur'ān does not say that ` They spend (in charity) of what they have ', but it says : `of what We have provided them'. In this manner, it generalizes the subject of `charity' so broadly that it includes all the material and .spiritual gifts of Allah

Therefore, the pious ones are those who donate not only from their material bounties but also from their spiritual gifts such as knowledge, science, intellect, physical power, or social abilities, and, in short, from all they have in their own possession. They donate from their own capital to those who are in need of them, and, in the meantime, .they do not expect any recompense from them

Another point is that the regulation of donation is a general regularity in the world of creation and, also, in the bodily system of every living creature. The heart of a man

does not beat for itself alone but it donates of whatever it has to all of the cells. The brain and the

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۱Jawahir-ul-Kalam, vol.۷, p.۱ -۱

lungs, as well as other organs of the body, continually donate the vital results of their active functions. And, generally speaking, social life with the lack of donation is .meaningless

Sincere coherence with human beings is, in fact, coherence and attachment to Allah. A person who is attached to Allah, and knows that all bounties and sustenance proceed from Him, not from himself, will not be displeased with giving charity but will be happy to donate His gifts to His servants on His way, and, as a consequence, he gains the physical and spiritual merits for doing it for himself. (For the importance of charity and its effects, refer to later explanations concerning Sura

Al-Baqarah, No.۲, verses ۲۶۱-۲۷۴). At any rate, this kind of thinking purifies the soul of man from miserliness and envy. It changes the world of ` struggle for existence ' to the world of ` humanity and civilization ', a world in which everybody bonds himself to sharing his bounties with all the needy in his environment and, like the sun, gives light .to his surroundings without expecting any favor in return or recompense

It is notable that on the meaning of the phrase : "(They) spend (in charity) of what We have provided them", a tradition from Imam Ṣādiq (a.s.) says : " It means that they share (and teach to those who need) the knowledge and science Allah has taught (them." (۱

It is obvious that this statement does not mean that donation is specific to knowledge but, since when speaking about charity almost all the attention is usually turned to monetary donations, Imam Ṣādiq (a.s.), by mentioning this kind of spiritual donation, .'wanted to clarify the broadness of the meaning of `donation

So therefore, this idea makes it very clear that the word `charity', referred to in the verse under discussion, is not restricted to the ` obligatory alms giving ' (Zakāt), but refers to alms in general, irrespective of obligatory or recommended ones; therefore, .it has a vast meaning which includes any kind of help given gratuitously

Majma'-ul-Bayan vol. ١, p. ٣٩; and Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. ١, p. ٣٢ ١ -١

وَالّذينَ يُؤْمِنونَ بِماآ اُنْزِلَ اِلَيْکَ وَ ماآ اُنْزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلِکَ وَبِالْآخِرهِ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ

,(And who believe in what has been revealed to you (Muhammad "

and what has been sent down (to other apostles) before

".you; and of the Hereafter they are certain

Commentary : Verse ۴

Belief in Divine Revelations

Another characteristic of the pious ones is belief in all of the prophets and the Divine designs. The Qur'ān says that they are those who believe in what has been revealed to Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) (i.e. the Qur'ān) and what has been sent down (to other apostles preceding him like the Turah, the Evangel, the Psalms of David and the .(rest of the Divine Books

Therefore, not only they do not feel that there is any difference in the basis of the invitation of prophets, but they know all prophets to be similar truthful teachers and trainers who came, one after another, in this great school of the world of human beings to persuade people to pave the path of their development. Further, the pious ones not only do not consider the Divine religions the cause of dispersion and hypocrisy, but, regarding their fundamental unity, recognize them as a means of .relation and sincere communication among nations

Those who have this sort of concept and this point of view would cleanse their souls and minds from the dirt of obstinacy, and believe in all that the prophets of Allah have brought forth for the guidance and development of the human race. They would .'respect all the `guides' of the path of `Monotheism

Belief in the instructions of the prophets of the past (a.s.), of course, does not mean that they do not adapt their thoughts and deeds to the religion of the last prophet (p.b.u.h.), which is the last and completing link of the series of religions. If they do .anything other than that, they, in fact, regress on their path towards development

Faith in the Resurrection is an epithet which is mentioned as the

p:۸۶

last quality in this series of qualities for the pious ones. (١) It says : "... and of the Hereafter they are certain."

In the phrase /wa bil 'āxirati hum yūqinūn/ the word /yaqīn/ is the state of conviction and certainty reached through accepting undoubtable evidence or unquestionable proof in /muttaqīn/. One of the epithets of `the pious ones', / muttaqīn /, is having an unshakably firm conviction and certainty that the ultimate purpose of life here lies in the realm beyond it, in the direction towards the Absolute.

They are sure that Man is not created uselessly and purposelessly. The creation has defined a route for him which will never end with death, for, if everything came to a completion in this world, all of these statements and tremendous activities and movements in the universe would certainly be in vain if it was meant only for a brief temporary life.

He accepts that the Absolute Justice of Allah is waiting for all humankind and it is not so that our deeds in this world will be disregarded without having any reckoning and compensation.

This belief provides him with ease and tranquility. The stresses resulting from the fulfilment of responsibilities not only do not hurt him, but on the contrary he receives them willingly. He stands firmly in front of misfortunes. He does not resign to any unjust matter. He is sure that even the smallest action, good or evil, will be compensated; and, after death, he will be transferred to a more comprehensive world where no cruelty or oppression exists. But he will meet the infinite favour and Mercy of Allah, the Just.

Certainty of thr Hereafter

Belief in the Hereafter means cleaving the binding walls of materialism and reaching a happy realm, better and higher than that. The present world is like a school wherein Man should best prepare himself for the coming world. The present life is not the final goal but it is a preparation for the next life which will be eternal.

This Life Likened to the Prenatal Period of Feoetus

The life in this world is also similar to the prenatal period of a

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۱-۱ True Faith is, indeed, accompanied with /yaqin/'certainty'. This status in a person may be defined from different scopes of view. The most important one of them is 'certainty of knowledge', which has been described as having three stages. More details are given on page ۲۰۸, vol. ۲, the current commentary.

foetus in the mother's womb. This period is not the purpose of the creation of man, of course, but it is an evolutional stage for the next period of life. Yet, if this foetus does not finish its course safely and without any defects or harm until the baby is born, it will not be happy and prosperous in its next life.

Profound Effect of Belief in the Hereafter

Belief in the Hereafter brings a profound effect in the behaviour of human beings. It gives them courage and bravery, because, `martyrdom' in the way of a Divine holy purpose, which is life's climax of honour and pride in this world, is the most beloved thing to a believing person. Since, to him, martyrdom is the beginning of an eternal and everlasting life.

Belief in the Hereafter controls man against sins. In other words, our sins have a reverse ratio with our Faith in Allah and the Hereafter. The more that Faith is firm and decisive, the less the amount of sin is.

One reference is the words of Allah where He commands David (a.s) : "... and do not follow desire, lest it should lead you astray from the path of Allah: (as for) those who go astray from the path of Allah, they shall surely have a severe punishment because they forgot the Day of Reckoning ", (Sura Ṣād, No. ۳۸, verse ۲۶).

Yes, this forgetfulness of the `Day of Reckoning' in man is the origin of the kinds of disobedience, cruelty, and corruption which are the total source of grievous punishment.

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أُولـئِـکَ عَلـی هُـدًی مِـنْ رَبِّهِـمْ وَ أُولـئِکَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

They are on (true) guidance from their Lord; and they are "

".the ones who are the successful

Commentary : Verse ۵

Both guidance and success guaranteed to the pious ones by Allah

The last verse in the verses under discussion refers to the fruit and the destination of :the pious ones who have acquired the above five attributes. It says

They are on (true) guidance from their Lord; and they are the ones who are the " ".successful

In fact, both their guidance and their successfulness are guaranteed by Allah. So, it can be said that the only path towards felicity and salvation is the path of this group who, with these five special attributes, have received the guidance of Allah. The reason for the restriction, / 'ulā'ika / the pious ones only , is clear in that His guidance is always universal but only the people with such characteristics

who have chosen His narrow path, and none else, can be benefited by it, and will be .successful in their life-journey in this world and the next

It is worthy to note that the term / hidāyat / ` guidance ', as was stated before, has a vast meaning including many kinds of guidance, all of which originate from Him alone, such as : Divine Guidance, Religious Guidance, and Natural Guidance. Some details about ` guidance ' were discussed when commenting on verse ۶ from Sura Al-(Fātiḥah.(۱

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For further explanation about 'guidance' review pages ۵۵-۶۱ in this very ۱ - ۱ commentary book. ⁕ By the way, imitating the style in Sura Al-Fatihah, these five beginning verses of the Sura, which were mentioned as a group at first, are

exceptionally repeated again one by one both in Arabic and English when commenting on each of them. The cause of this repetition was the length of their descriptions. But from here on, only the English translations and the descriptions will be mentioned.

۶ اِنَّ الَّذی–نَ کَف–رُوا سَ–واءٌ عَلَیْهِ–مْ ءَاَنْذَرْتَهُ–مْ اَمْ لَمْ تُنْذِرْهُ–مْ لا یُؤْمِنُ–ونَ

۷ خَتَمَ اللّهُ عَل–ی قُلُوبِهِ–مْ وَ عَل–ی سَمْعِهِ–مْ وَ عَل–ی اَبْصارِهِمْ غِش–اوَةٌ وَلَهُ–مْ عَ–ذابٌ عَظی–مٌ

Surely, (as for) those who reject Faith, it is the same to them " .۶

whether you have warned them or have not warned

".them, they will not believe

,Allah has set a seal on their hearts and on their hearing " .۷

and over their eyes is a covering, and there awaits

".them a great punishment

Commentary : Vesre ۶–۷

Disbelievers, the Second Group

Point

The followers of this group are just the opposite of `the pious

ones'. Their characteristics are concisely expressed in the above two

: verses. In the first verse, it says

Surely, (as for) those who reject Faith, it is the same to them "

whether you have warned them or have not warned

".them, they will not believe

The first group, i.e., the pious ones, in all aspects and with all of their talents and .faculties, are thoroughly ready to accept the truth and follow it when they receive it

But this group, i.e. disbelievers, insist on their aberration so rigorously that they do not agree to show any inclination towards the truth even when it becomes completely

clear to them. The Qur'ān, which is a guide for the pious ones, is totally noneffective for this group. It makes no difference to them whether you describe for them or not, warn them or not, give good tidings to them or not. In principle, they are not spiritually .ready to follow the ` right path ' or submit to it

p:۹۰

The second verse refers to the reason behind the existence of this bigotry and stubbornness. It indicates that they have sunk into impiety, infidelity, and enmity so : deeply that they have lost their power of distinction. It says

Allah has set a seal on their hearts and on their hearing, and over their eyes is a " ."... ,covering

And for that reason, a great penalty is appropriate for them as the consequence of their deeds, and they deserve it. As Allah warns: "... and there awaits them a great ". punishment

Thus, the eyes by which the pious ones see the signs of Allah, the ears through which they hear the words of right, and the hearts (and minds) wherein they conceive realities, are of no avail to the second group. They have minds, eyes, and ears but, when it comes to realities, they are not able to understand, to see, or to hear, indeed, because their disgraceful actions, their stubbornness, and their enmity, like curtains, .have covered over these means of acknowledgement

It is certain that man is worthy of being guided before he reaches this state, even if he is rather astray. But when he loses his sense of distinction, there will not be any way for him to attain felicity, because he does not have the means of acknowledgement. So, it is natural that `the great punishment awaits him'. This case is like the situation of a lazy student who, by his own mischoice, does not strive to study hard enough and .consequently becomes involved in the torment of ignorance and lack of certification

The important fact is that one should be careful of sins, and when he commits one, he should repent soon and wipe it out with doing good deeds, lest the sin will remain as a fast colour stain on his heart, that which would seal the heart (with sin). The turning of the mind and the heart from the ` real ' towards the `unreal', when it gets rigid is .'termed in the Holy Qur'ān as `sealing

A tradition from Imam Bāqir (a.s.) says : " There is not a believing servant but there is a white bright site on his heart. When he commits a sin, there appears a black dot in that site. If he repents, the black dot will disappear. But if he continues committing

sins, that black dot enlarges until it covers the white bright site completely. When this site is covered (with blackness) the holder of this heart will never return back to doing good

p:۹۱

deeds. This is the meaning of the words of Allah, Almighty and Glorious, when He says : ` Nay! Rather what they used to do has put rust upon their hearts '.", (Sura (Mutaffifīn, No ۸۳, verse ۱۴). (۱

Infidelity and its Meaning

Point

Philologically, the term /kufr/ means `to cover, to conceal'. In religion it means : `to deny the Grace or the Existence of Allah, His prophet, the prophecies of the apostles, and the Resurrection'. He who denies these principles of the religion, even only one of them, according to the consensus of Muslims, is out of the Circle of Islam and .becomes counted among the disbelievers

'Infidelity, `the corrupt tree

Anyhow, infidelity is `the corrupt tree' whose root is false ideas, its trunk is immorality, its branches and leaves are sins and vices, and its fruit is disgrace in this world and punishment in the coming world. But Faith is `the good tree' whose root is true conviction, its trunk is fair virtues, its branches and leaves are good deeds, and its fruit is the happiness and prosperity in this world and the next world which, itself, is .eternal salvation

'Faith, 'the Good Tree

Sura 'Ibrāhīm, No ۱۴, verses ۲۴-۲۶ say : " Have you not considered how Allah sets forth a parable of a goodly word (being) like a goodly tree, whose root is firm and whose branches are in heaven," "Yielding its fruit in every season by the leave of its Lord ? And Allah sets forth parables for men that they may receive admonition ". " And the parable of an evil word is as an evil tree pulled up from the surface of the earth, it has ." no stability

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Usul-i-Kafi, vol.۲, p.۲۰۹, Tradition ۲۰ ۱ -۱

Verses ۸–۱۶; Arabic

(Sura Al-Baqarah No. ۲ (Verses ۸-۱۶

۸ وَمِنَ النّاسِ مَنْ يَقُولُ امَنّا بِاللّهِ وَبِالْيَوْمِ الْاخِرِ وَم-اهُ-مْ بِمُ-ؤْمِنى-نَ

۹ يُخادِعُونَ اللّهَ وَالَّذينَ امَنوُا وَما يَخْدَعوُنَ اِلّا اَنْفُسَهُمْ وَما يَشْعُرُون

۱۰ فى قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ فَزادَهُمُ اللّهُ مَرَض-ًا وَلَهُمْ عَذابٌ اَليمٌ بِما كان-ُوا يَكْذِب-ُونَ

۱۱ وَاِذا قيلَ لَهُمْ لا تُفْسِدُوا فِى الْأرْضِ قال-ُوا اِنَّم-ا نَحْنُ مُصْلِحوُنَ

۱۲ اَلا اِنَّهُمْ هُمُ الْمُفْسِدُونَ وَلكِنْ لا يَشْعُرُونَ

۱۳ وَاِذا قيلَ لَهُمْ امِنُوا كَما امَنَ النّاسُ قال-ُوا اَنُؤْمِنُ كَما امَنَ السُّفَهاءُ اَلا اِنَّهُمْ هُمُ السُّفَهاءُ وَل-كِنْ لا يَعْلَمُونَ

۱۴ وَاِذا لَقُواالَّذينَ امَنُوا قال-ُوا امَنّا وَاِذا خَلَوْا اِلى شَياطينِهِمْ قال-ُوا اِنّا مَعَكُمْ اِنَّما نَحْنُ مُسْتَهْزِؤُنَ

۱۵ اَللّهُ يَسْتَهْزِئُ بِهِمْ وَيَمُدُّهُمْ فى طُغْيانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ

۱۶ اُول-ئِ-كَ الَّذى-نَ اشْتَ-رَوُا الضَّ-لالَ-ةَ بِالْهُ-دى فَما رَبِحَتْ تِجارَتُهُمْ وَما كانُوا مُهْتَدينَ

English Translation

Sura Al-Baqarah

(The Cow)

(No. ۲ (Verses ۸-۱۶

And of people there are some who say : ` We believe in Allah and the Last Day', " .۸
".but they do not really believe

They seek to deceive Allah and those who have Faith, but they deceive none save " .۹
".themselves, and they are not aware

In their hearts is a disease, so Allah has increased their disease and there awaits " .۱۰
".them a painful punishment for that they were lying

And when it is said to them : `Do not make corruption in the earth', they say :" .۱۱
".'`Verily, we are only reformers

".Indeed, they themselves are the corruptors, but they are not aware " .۱۲

And when it is said to them : `Believe as the people believe', they say : `Shall we " .۱۳
believe as the fools believe ?' Beware! Truly, they themselves are the fools, but they
".do not know

And when they meet those who believe, they say : ` We believe (in what you " .۱۴
: believe)', but when they are alone with their evil ones, they say

".'Verily, we are with you; we were only mocking`

Allah shall pay them back for their mockery, and He leaves them alone in their " .۱۵
".inordinacy, blindly wandering on

These are they who have bought error (in exchange) for guidance, hence their " .۱۶
".(transaction yields them no profit, nor are they guided (aright

Commentary : Verses ۸–۱۶

Hypocrites, the Third Group

Point

The above verses state a short but very expressive explanation on `hypocrites' and .their spiritual specialties and characteristics illustrated by their actions

Attention should be attracted to the fact that : In a special period of its sensitive historical course, Islam was faced with a specific group among the whole of the people, who neither had the courage to truly accept the invitation of Islam, nor had .the power and boldness to openly oppose it

This third group, whom the Qur'ān calls, in Arabic terminology, /munāfiqūn/ `hypocrites', are also termed the two-faced ones. They penetrate in the rows of true Muslim communities and become a great danger for Islam and Muslims. It is usually difficult for the faithful believers to recognize them, because they appear in the society with the same manner as other Muslims do. But the Qur'ān yields some clear exact signs and specialties about them which identify their hidden routines everywhere and in all centuries. These particular qualifications can provide good criteria for the real Muslims to recognize them. At the beginning, it gives an illustration : of hypocrisy itself, saying

And of the people there are some who say : `We believe in Allah and the Last Day', " ".but they do not really believe

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They imagine this action of theirs as a kind of cleverness or, so to speak, an advantageous policy. Therefore : " They seek to deceive Allah and those who have "...,Faith

It is not such as they think : "... but they deceive none save themselves, and they are not aware". Having deviated from the Straight Path, they spend their whole lives

misled. They apply their power and potentials in vanity where their gain is nothing but .failure, infamy, and a painful Divine penalty

****

Hypocrites, a Disease

In the next verse, the Qur'ān points to the fact that hypocrisy is, indeed, a disease. A .safe and sound person does not have two faces

There is complete harmony ruling between his soul and his body, since outward and inward, as well as body and spirit, are complementary to each other. If a person is a believing one, his entire being cries Faith and indicates his conviction. And if he goes astray, his deviation is revealed both outwardly and inwardly. This dissimilarity of spirit and body possessed by the hypocrite is a new additional disease. It is a sort of .contradiction or duplicity or cleft that governs over the self of a man

"... ,Then, it says :"In their hearts is a disease

Hence, in the regularity of creation, everybody who choses a path and equips himself with the necessary means to pave it would go forth on that very path. Or, in other words, the abundancy of actions and imaginations of a man on his chosen route would make the above idea much more colourful and secure. Then, the verse :continues saying

"...so Allah has increased their disease ..."

The investment of the hypocrite is `lies'. They adjust the contradictions found in their lives, as much as they can; each lie with its own set of excuses. Therefore, at the end of the verse, it says : "... and there awaits them a painful punishment for that they ." were lying

'Hypocrites, Claim to be 'Reformers

Then, the Qur'ān refers to their specialties, the first of which is the claim of being : `reformers', while they are, in fact, mischief-mongers, saying

And when it is said to them : `Do not make corruption in the earth', they say : ` " ".' Verily, we are only reformers

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".Indeed, they themselves are the corruptors, but they are not aware "

Both their persistence on the path of hypocrisy and their accustomedness to these hideous disgraceful agenda have caused them to think, gradually, that their activities are useful and constructive. And, as it was mentioned previously, when sin is in excess and treads the limits, it seizes the sense of distinction, or even, it reverses the man's

.distinction. In this state, impurity and impiety prevail as his second nature

****

Hypocrites, Think Themselves Wise

Another specialty of this group is that they think themselves wise and clever while they think the believers are some simple-minded and credulous fools; as the Qur'ān :says

:And when it is said to them : `Believe as the people believe', they say "

"...'?Shall we believe as the fools believe`

Thus, they accuse the truth-seeking, pure-hearted people of foolishness, for that these people, observing the signs of reality and rightfulness in the content of the invitation of the Prophet of Islam (p.b.u.h.), have humbly accepted it. The hypocrites consider corruption, duplicity, and hypocrisy signs of their cleverness and wisdom. .Yes, in their logic, intellect has changed its place with foolishness

So, the Qur'ān, answering them, says : "... Beware! Truly, they themselves are the ".fools, but they do not know

Is this not, within itself, a kind of foolishness, that a person does not specify his conviction, but changes colour according to whatever group or class of ideology he joins, and assumes duplicity or even multifariousness? Is it not silly for a person to spend his faculties and abilities in doing evil and making plots for destruction and, in ?the meantime, to count himself among the wise

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Hypocrites, Change colour everyday

The third specialty is that they change colour everyday, and choose the direction of :every group they meet. As the Holy Qur'ān says

:And when they meet those who believe, they say"

."...'(We believe (in what you believe`

They tell the believers that they follow the same school of thought as theirs, that is, .they have accepted Islam eagerly and there is no difference between them

:but when they are alone with their evil ones, they say ..."

"... ;Verily, we are with you`

They tell their fellow men that they are mocking the believers when telling them that ".'they have believed : "... we were only mocking

p:۹۷

They say to them that they are deceiving them and, actually, they are supporters of their fellow men whom they have taken friend with and, keep their secrets safe and .hidden

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:Then, the Qur'ān, with a beating and decisive tone says

Allah shall pay them back for their mockery, and He leaves them alone in their " ".inordinancy, blindly wandering on

The concluding verse, on this subject, expresses their final fate which is a very : grievous, inauspicious, and dark end, thus

These are they who have bought error (in exchange) for guidance, hence their " ".(transaction yields them no profit, nor are they guided (aright

For this very reason, their purchase not only is of no avail for them, but also they have .lost even their investment

: Explanations

The Appearance of Hypocrisy and its Roots

When a revolution takes place in a society, particularly a revolution like the Islamic Revolution which was founded on the virtues of Right and Justice, the interests of an oppressive, tyranical, and selfish group will be exposed and possibly placed in danger. At first, this group mock it, then they apply the power of guns, economic sanctions, and continuous social propagation in order to try to subvert it. But when the signs of triumph are made manifest for all of the forces and authorities of the region, some of the opponents change their practical style of opposition and apparently resign themselves, but, in fact, they organize a hidden antagonistic group against the revolution. These vicious individuals who are termed `hypocrites', because of their actual duplicity, are the most harmful enemies of the revolution, because their position is not quite clear so that the revolutionists can

recognize them and avoid them. They deceitfully imitate and join the faithful people and occupy some social positions in the rows of the pure, truthful believers. They .sometimes attain the sensitive posts, even

Until the time when the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) emigrated from Mecca to Medina, Muslims had not established a government. The prime essential basis of the Islamic government was founded when the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) arrived in Medina. This process was made more manifest with the occurrence of the triumph of Badr, viz., a .small but progressive government was formally organized

It was at that time that the profits of many authorities in Medina, particularly that of the Jews, who were respected by Arabs, were being threatened. The Jews were respected at that time, mostly because they were of ` the People of the Book '. (١) They were fairly learned, and they were economically advanced. It was they who, before the advent of the prophet of Islam (p.b.u.h.) used to give the good news of his .coming

There were others, too, who were aspiring for the leadership of the people of Medina and were disappointed due to the migration of the Messenger of Allah. The cruel, selfish chieves of Medina and their plunderous adherents saw that people, even their relatives, were tending to Islam and abundantly believing in the Prophet (p.b.u.h.). They, after resisting for a short time, understood that they could not help but to accept Islam, though only outwardly. They realized that if they had opposed and stood against the new process, besides the damages of war and economical problems, they would have faced the danger of destruction; particularly because the total power of the Arab was his tribe, but their tribes had separated from them for the .most part

For this reason, they had developed a grudge in their hearts against the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) and his mission. So, they secretly planned to subvert Islam. Therefore, they selected a third way. They decided to accept the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) apparently, and to (follow their own plots hiddenly.(٢

.For the meaning of the People of the Book 'see p. ٢٠٢ ١ -١

This example also happened in the Islamic Revolution of Iran where they played ٢ -٢ the same role but, luckily, under the light of Allah's Grace and through the awareness .of this honourable nation, they failed

In short, the appearance of hypocrisy in a society is usually the effect of one of these two causes. The first is the triumph and power of the existing revolutionary school of thought in the society. The second cause is the spiritual weakness and the lack of .nobility and courage needed to challenge such a force

The Necessity of Knowing the Hypocrite

Point

Undoubtedly, hypocrisy and the hypocrite were not only particular to the time of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.); they are found in any society and at any time. They should be recognized, of course, according to the defined criteria that the Qur'ān has introduced .them with, in order to prevent their probable damages or harms

A few of their characteristics

There are various characteristics mentioned about the hypocrite in the former verses, as well as through Sura Al-Munāfiqūn, No. ۶۳, and, also, in numerous Islamic :traditions. Here are a few of these characteristics

Great public outbursts and high claims with lots of boasting, but little action making .۱ .their claims and actions unparallel

To swing to every side in any environment with any group; to speak among any .۲ society with the ideas of that society's school of thought, and to show themselves adherents in the society of true followers but, in the meantime, to cooperate with the .oppositional group

To separate their affairs from those of the people and to form secret hidden .۳ .societies with specific plans

.Characterized by tricks, deceit, lies, flattery, breach of promises, and treachery .۴

To act before others with self-aggrandizement and self-conceit, counting people .۵ .silly, simple, and foolish, while knowing themselves wise and clever

In short, duplicity of personality, or contrast between internal and external, which is the clear characteristic of the hypocrite, has different effects on their personal and .social behaviour, which can be easily figured out by the keen observer

How beautifully the Qur'ān puts it when it says : " In their hearts is

a disease, ...". Which sickness can be worse than the sickness of duplicity of outward and inward character? What disease is more painful than the illness of self-aggrandizement or lack of courage for challenging the things that we do not believe in ?

However, the disease of hypocrisy, though it is hidden, is recognizeable by its different features. It is similar to heart disease which cannot be concealed wholly; although it is unseen, its signs and symptoms can be seen in one's face and limbs .quite vividly

Hypocrisy, in its specific meaning, is the condition of some faithless persons who are apparently counted among Muslims, but their hearts are actually pledged to infidelity. They are the most dangerous group, not only for Islam but also for any revolutionary progressive school of thought. The hypocrites penetrate into the communities of Muslims and misuse any chance or opportunity for hindering affairs. For this very hostile position that they have, they are the object of serious attacks in the Qur'ān. One complete Sura of the Qur'ān is revealed about their circumstances which is entitled ` Al-Munāfiqūn '. They have also been reproached and condemned very .(.strongly in the narrations of Ahlul-Bait (a.s

To introduce the hypocrite, a tradition from Imam Ṣādiq (a.s.) who has narrated from the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) says : "There are three specialities that when they are in a person, he/she is a hypocrite even the one who observes the fast, practices prayers and considers oneself a Muslim: he who is treacherous when he is trusted, when he (speaks he tells lies, and when he promises he fails it". (١

Here, we attract your attention to the noble words of Imam Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali : (a.s.) about the hypocrites. He says

O' creatures of Allah! I advise you to fear, and I warn you against the hypocrites. " They themselves are misguided and they will misguide you. They are lost in the labyrinth of sins and vices and will make you lose your straight path in that tortuous maze. They change their colours to suit their surroundings, and their words always have double meanings. To convert you to their views and to win your sympathies they

will resort to every sort of fraud and pretence, will adopt varieties of artifices and

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Safinatul-Bihar, vol.۲, p.۶۰۵ -۱

pretexts and will apply all possible allurements and deceptions. They always lie in ambush to seduce you. They pretend to be sincere and honest but their hearts are full of hypocrisy and vileness. Their movements are very subtle. To mislead you they work so artfully and cunningly that you cannot easily find out their purpose. They poison your minds without your knowing it, like a disease spreading inside your body without your realizing the fact. They behave as if they are ministering cures to your ailments. They talk as if they really feel for your troubles, but the result of their .activities and their persuasions will affect you like an incurable disease

Happiness and prosperity of others make them jealous and unhappy. They will do their worst to drag others into difficulties, reverses, and troubles. They will exert themselves to convert hopes of others into disappointments and despairs. And they .have their victims in every walk of life

They know how to touch your heart and how to gain your ears. For your every sorrow they have crocodile tears to shed and for every pain they offer you a balm, ineffective or injurious. If they praise you, it is with the hope of getting louder praises out of you. If they want to get something out of you, they will pester you with their demands. If they wish to slander anybody they will expose him threadbare. If they pass judgments they always forsake equity and justice ".(۱)

Nahjul-Balaqah, Sermon ۱۹۴ Arabic print, and No. ۱۹۹, p. ۱۷۲ English version ۱ -۱

Sura Al-Baqarah

(The Cow)

Verses ١٧–٢٠), Arabic)

١٧ مَثَلُهُمْ كَمَثَلِ الَّذِی اسْتَوْقَدَ نارًا فَلَمّا اَضاءَتْ ما حَوْلَهُ ذَهَبَ اللّهُ بِنُورِهِمْ وَتَرَکَهُمْ فی ظُلُماتٍ لا یُبْصِرُونَ

١٨ صُمٌّ بُکْمٌ عُمْیٌ فَهُمْ لا یَرْجِعُونَ

١٩ اَوْ کَصَیِّبٍ مِنَ السَّماءِ فیهِ ظُلُماتٌ وَ رَعْدٌ وَ بَرْقٌ یَجْعَلُونَ اَصابِعَهُمْ فی اذانِهِمْ منَ الصَّواعِقِ حَذَرَالْمَوْتِ وَاللّهُ مُحیطٌ بِالْکافِرینَ

٢٠ یَکادُ الْبَرْقُ یَخْطَفُ اَبْصارَهُمْ کُلَّما اَضاءَلَهُمْ مَشَوْا فیهِ وَاِذا اَظْلَمَ عَلَیْهِمْ قامُوا وَلَوْشاءَ اللّهُ لَذَهَبَ بِسَمْعِهِمْ وَاَبْصارِهِمْ اِنَّ اللّهَ
عَلی کُلِّ شَیْءٍ قَدیرٌ

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p:١٠٣

English Translation

Sura Al-Baqarah

(The Cow)

(Verses ١٧-٢٠)

١٧. "The likeness of them is as the likeness of a man who kindled a fire, and when it lit all about him Allah took away their light, and left them in darkness unseeing."

١٨. "(They are) deaf, dumb, blind so they shall not return (to the right path)."

١٩. "Or (their) likeness is as a rainstorm from heaven wherein is darkness, thunder and lightning. They put their fingers in their ears against the thunderclaps, fearful of death; thus Allah encompasses the infidels."

٢٠. "The lightning well-nigh snatches away their sight, whensoever it gives them light, they walk therein, and when it darkens over them they stand still. Had Allah willed, He would have taken away their hearing and their sight. Truly, Allah is All-powerful over all things."

Commentary : Verses ١٧-٢٠

Two Interesting Parables Illustrating the Hypocrite

After stating the epithets and characteristics of the hypocrite, the Holy Qur'ān, in order to illustrate their condition, likens them to two expressive parables:

١. In the first parable, the idea is that they are similar to a person who kindles a fire (by dark night) (to distinguish the right way from the false way under its light and reach the destination). It says:

"The likeness of them is as the likeness of a man who kindled a fire, and when it lit all about him Allah took away their light, and left them in darkness unseeing."

They think they can challenge against the darkness they are in

with a small little fire. But, it happens that suddenly a storm arrives, or a heavy rain falls, or their fuel runs out and the fire dies in coldness; so, they remain helpless, .wandering in the terrible darkness

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Then, it adds : "(They are) deaf, dumb, blind so they shall not return (to the right path)", because they no longer have the essential necessary means of grasping the .truth in their possession

Allah, the Exalted, stating the status of the hypocrites and unbelievers, informs His Messenger that they have totally lost their human innate potentialities. They, abusing it, have destroyed the talent which Allah has originally put in their created nature and they should revive it in order for it to be used correctly. They have entirely deprived themselves of the real function of the divine faculties of sight, hearing, and speech. .These sense organs are practically left useless and ineffective

.In the second parable, the scene of their life is illustrated in another way .۲

It is a dark fearful night, full of terror and danger. The rain is heavily falling and lightning flashes in the corner of the horizon every now and then. The horrible crashes of thunder seem to tear the eardrums. A defenceless person, amazed at the situation in this vast dark dangerous plain, gains no benefit. For this frightened person, whose back is wet from the rain, there is neither a safe and secure shelter to take refuge, .nor does the darkness let him step forth towards his destination

The Holy Qur'ān, in a short sentence, explains the situation of such a wandering passenger, thus : " Or (their) likeness is as a rainstorm from heaven wherein is "... .darkness, thunder and lightning

Then, it adds : "...They put their fingers in their ears against the thunderclaps, fearful "... ;of death

And, at the end of the verse, the Qur'ān points to a fact that wherever the disbelievers go, they are under the forceful control and watch of Allah. It says : "... thus Allah

".encompasses the infidels

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p:۱۰۵

.In this situation lightning brightens the expanse of the sky again and again

"... ,The lightning well-nigh snatches away their sight "

Whenever the lightning strikes and lightens the dark spread of the desert, they walk a few steps under that light, but, immediately after that, they find themselves in the same darkness they were in before :

whensoever it gives them light, they walk therein, and when it darkens over them..." "... .they stand still

Every moment, they feel the danger in front of them because there is nothing in this desert, such as a mountain, a tree, or anything else for them to seek refuge in order to protect themselves from the danger of the flash of lightning and thunderblot. At any moment they may be seized by the lightning as its prey and be laid in ashes in a !blink of an eye

There is even the danger of the sound of thunder tearing their eardrums and the sharp flash of lightning blinding their eyes. Yes, it is true : "... Had Allah willed, He would have taken away their hearing and

".their sight. Truly, Allah is All-powerful over all things

At the time of the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.), the quick spread of Islam, like the lightning, dazzled their eyes, and the verses of the Qur'ān, which uncovered their secrets, surrounded them as quick as lightning. They thought that another verse might come down, too, and remove the curtains from some other secrets, so, they would become .publicly more disgraced

The Qur'ān also points to this very meaning where it says : " The Hypocrites are afraid lest a Sura should be sent down about them, showing them what is (really passing) in their hearts, say: `Mock you! But verily Allah will bring to light all that you fear (should .(be revealed)'." (Sura At-Taubah, No. ۹, verse ۶۴

Again, the Qur'ān, verifying that the hypocrites were always in terror and fear that,

with their secrets being manifested, Allah's command would come down for the Muslims to fight them, the worst

interior enemy of Islam, and destroy them, says : "Truly, if the Hypocrites, and those in whose hearts is a disease, and those who stir up sedition in the City, desist not, We shall certainly stir thee up against them: then will they not be able to stay in it as your neighbours for any length of time:" " They

shall have a curse on them: wherever they are found, they shall be siezed and slain .((without mercy)." (Sura Al-Aḥzāb, No. ۳۳, verses ۶۰ and ۶۱

In the Islamic literature, as was mentioned before, the traditions and data narrated about the hypocrite are abundant. One of them is the tradition that Imam Ṣādiq (a.s.) quoted from his father and grandfathers who,in turn, had narrated from the Messenger of Allah (p.b.u.h.) who, addressing Hadrat Ali-ibn-Abītālib (a.s.), said : " There are three signs for a believer : prayer, fasting, and alms. There are also indications referring to a hypocrite : when he speaks he tells lies, when he promises, ,he breaks them

(and when he is entrusted with (something), he proves himself to be dishonest".(۱)

Again, `Abdullāh `Umar narrates from the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) that there are four characteristics which are the signs of hypocrisy: lie in speech, excuse in promise, (wickedness in enmity, and dishonesty in deposit. (۲)

Bihar-ul-Anwar, vol. ۷۷, p.۵۳, Tradition ۳ ۱ -۱

Musnad Ahmad-ibn-Hanbal, vol.۲ p. ۱۹۸ ۲ -۲

۲۱ يا اَيُّهَا النّاسُ اعْبُدُوا رَبَّكَمُ الَّذى خَلَقَكَمْ وَالَّذينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَمْ لَعَلَّكَمْ تَتَّقُونَ

۲۲ اَلَّذى جَعَـِلَ لَكُمُ الأَرْضَ فِراشـًا وَالسَّمـاءَ بِنـاءً وَاَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّماءِ ماءً فَاَخْرَجَ بِهِ مِنَ الثَّمَراتِ رِزْقـًا لَكُمْ فَلا تَجْعَلُوا لِلّهِ اَنْـدادًا وَاَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

O'mankind! Worship your Lord Who created you, and those before you, so that " .۲۱ you may guard yourselves (against evil),"

Who has spread out the earth as a resting place for you, and has made heaven as " .۲۲ a canopy, and has sent down water from heaven, wherewith He brings forth fruits for your sustenance; so do not set up rivals with Allah while you know."

Commentary : Verses ۲۱-۲۲

Do Worship Allah!

In the former verses, Allah describes the statuses of three groups of people (the righteous, the disbelievers, and the hypocrites), by explaining that the righteous are inside the circle of the Divine Guidance and the Qur'ān guides them; while the hearts of the disbelievers are sealed with ignorance and, because of their own deeds, their eyes are covered with negligence which has taken away their sense of perception. And, the hypocrites are some ill-hearted people whose evil actions increase their sickness.

In the verses under discussion, after that vivid comparison, the path of felicity and salvation is specified as following the path of the first group, the righteous : " O' mankind! Worship your Lord Who created you, and those before you, so that you may guard yourselves (against evil),".

? What is Servitude and Worship

The word `servitude' in lexicon means : `the condition of subjection, submissiveness and obedience of a slave to a master'. Worship is the utmost aspect of submissiveness to the One Who is at the highest degree of virtue, kindness, benevolence, and magnanimity. That is why He has distinctly commanded : "...That .(you worship none but Him, ..." (Sura Al-Asra, No. ١٧, verse ٢٣

The person who has a little understanding can apply his intellect to know himself and his own Lord. When he recognizes himself, the one who has been considered the most noble creature, he will know his own Lord and Cherisher, too. This is a popular tradition that the person who after knowing himself, would know his Lord and Cherisher by that recognition. Then, as it is said, the key to the recognition of Allah is the recognition of one's self. When he finds himself in his servitude and his Lord in His Divinity, he understands that he should concentrate his obedience, humility, submissiveness and servitude unto the One in Whose hand and Will is his soul and entity; the One from Whom (s.w.t.) he takes sustenance constantly. If the emanation of existence from the Absolute Bountiful Origin ceased from him even for a moment, .he would be deprived of the bounty of existence

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: Some Explanations

Regarding the above verses, there are some points, here, that

: should be paid attention to

.١ The phrase /yā ayyu-han-nās/ ` O' mankind', which occurs twenty times in the Holy Qur'ān, has a general and collective meaning that envelops all human beings of any race, tribe, or colour. This clearly shows that the Holy Qur'ān does not pertain exclusively to a special group of people, but it invites every single person to its invitation, in general. It persuades everybody to accept Monotheism and refuse any .idolatry and deviation from the path of theism

To invoke the sense of people's thankfulness and to concentrate their attention on .۲ the worshipping of Allah, it begins from the greatest bounty, i.e., the bounty of the .creation of all human beings

p:۱۰۹

It is a bounty that illustrates both the Power of Allah and His Knowledge, in addition to His `General Mercy' and `Specific Mercy', because in the creation of Man, the best creature in the world of existence, the signs of His infinite Knowledge and Power, together with His vastly distributed bounties, are clearly seen.

The reason that some do not bow before Allah and do not worship Him is mostly because they do not contemplate their own creation and the creation of those who came before them. They do not take into consideration that it is not right to attribute this magnificent creation to the blind and deaf causes of nature. We cannot think of these accurate, reliable and incomparable bounties, which are vividly seen in the body and the spirit of Man, from any origin except Allah, Who is the source of all knowledge and power. Therefore, the remembrance of these bounties is both a reason for theology and a stimulus for thankfulness and worshipping, along the path of Allah.

۳. The fruit of this worshipping is piety and righteousness : "...so that you may guard (yourselves (against evil",.

Thus, our worshippings and prayers do not add anything to the Dignity and Glory of Allah, just as the abandoning of them does not take anything from His Greatness and Beauty. These kinds of practices are some training classes to teach man piety, which is synonomous with having a sense of responsibility, and, the standard of measuring one's personality. Finally, it is worship that causes man to attain the epithet of being pious, a good mood in the spirit of man, that comes into being as a result of worship and servitude unto Allah.

۴. The emphasis on the phrase : `Those before you', in the verse, may refer to the idea that if you agree with the custom of your ancestors that you should worship idols, Allah is the creator of both you and your ancestors. He is the Master and the Cherisher of you and your ancestors both. So, worshipping the idols, either done by you or by your ancestors, is not anything but aberration.

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Point

The Sky and the Earth are Bounties In the next verse, it points to some other great bounties of Allah that can serve to motivate men to be thankful. At first, it refers to the : creation of the Earth and its Creator

."... ,Who has spread out the earth as a resting place for you "

The Earth

The earth is like a mount that carries you on its back. It continues moving at a wonderful speed in space. It has different movements but you feel no shaking at all. .So the earth is one of Allah's great bounties

The Gravity

Another bounty is the gravity of the earth which enables you to walk, rest, build houses and to prepare gardens, fields, and all kinds of vehicles, instruments, etc; for your usage. Have you ever thought that if the gravity of Earth did not exist, because of its rotation, all of us and all of our houses and furniture, or, in general, everything ? on the globe would be immediately thrown floating into space

The term /firāŝ/ `a resting place' not only has the meaning of rest and tranquility, but .also contains the concept of being pleasant and warm with a moderate temperature

It is interesting that, commenting on this verse, Ali-ibn-il-Ḥusayn, the fourth Imam of the Shi`ah school (a.s.), has clearly explained this meaning, thus : " Allah has arranged the earth adapted to your nature and appropriate for your bodies. He made it neither very hot so that it roasts you, nor very cold so that it freezes you. He made it neither too aromatic so much so that its odor hurts your brains, nor too foul-smelling to cause your death. He planned it neither too soft so that you be drowned in it, like in water, nor too rigid and stable to enable you to build houses and make graves to bury the corpses of your men (which cause many disasters when they remain unburied)... Yes,

(it is for this reason that `He has spread out the earth as a resting place for you'."(۱)

The word /banā'/, considering the term /`alaykum/ `above you', refers to the meaning that the heaven is made up above you like a canopy. This idea is mentioned in another place in the Holy Qur'ān, saying: " And We have made the heaven as a canopy well guarded...", (Sura

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۱- Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. ۱, p. ۴۱

.(Al-Anbiyā' , No. ۲۱, verse ۳۲

This statement may seem amazing to some of those who are acquainted with the intrinsic structure of the heaven and earth from the point of modern astronomy. They may ask where and how this canopy is. Does this idea not call to mind the Ptolemaic Theory which indicated that planets are set over each other in the sky like the layers of an onion? The subject will be made clear when the following explanation is .considered

The Sky

The term /samā'/ has been used in the Qur'ān in different places whose common meaning is something alongside the solution to the above problem. One of those meanings is referred to in this verse. It is the very atmosphere around the earth, that is, the thick aerial distance with a mass of gases that has surrounded the globe whose thickness, according to what specialists have said, is, roughly speaking, hundreds of .kilometers, though it is not distributed uniformly in the vertical direction

If we contemplate the essential and vital function of this mass of air, generally called the atmosphere, which has enveloped the whole earth, we will understand how this strong and stable canopy, or ceiling, is effective in protecting the lives of human .beings

This special amount of air which, as a crystal ceiling, has surrounded us, the inhabitants of the earth, is so strong and resisting that in comparison with a steel dam several meters thick, it is stronger; while it does not hinder the brilliant sunshine, .which has a vital, life- giving and pleasant ray, from reaching us

If this ceiling were not over us, the earth would be continuously beaten with showers of celestial meteorites, wherein human beings would have no peace and calmness. But this several hundred kilometer thick airy ceiling burns almost all the celestial meteorites before they reach the surface of the earth, except a few of them which can sometimes pass through it and fall somewhere on the ground to warn the earthly living creatures as a ring of danger. This small number of stones has never succeeded

to destroy the security of human lives yet; except on those occasions that Allah used .them to destroy previous generations for their evil deeds

The atmosphere, a vast and complicated physical system, has a

.basic environmental influence on plant, animal, and human life

One of the references which shows that one of meanings of the Arabic word /samā'/ as `the atmosphere of the earth', is a tradition cited by the sixth Imam, Imam Ṣādiq (a.s.) describing the colour of the sky for one of his followers, Mufaddal. He said : "O Mufaddal! Contemplate the colour of the sky which Allah has created so that it seems blue, a colour that is the most appropriate for the eyes, and looking at it strengthens (the vision."(١

We all know today that the blue colour of the sky is nothing but the reflection of sunlight on the intense thick air around the earth. Therefore, the word /samā,/ `sky', (here, refers to the very `atmosphere of the earth'.(٢

Sura An-Naḥl, No. ١۶, verse ٢٩ says : " Do they not look at the birds held poised in the midst of (the air and) the sky? " Then it refers to rain, thus : "...and has sent down ."...,water from heaven

But, what water! It is a life-giver, an essential producer of vital energy, and the origin .of all inhabited regions containing many material blessings

The Rain

The phrase : " and has sent down water from heaven ", confirms the fact, once more, that /samā'/, here, means the atmosphere of the earth. And we know that it is clouds that produce rain and clouds are the formation of water vapor floating in the air, .above the surface of the earth

Commenting on the bounty of rain coming down from the sky, Ali-ibn-il-Ḥusayn, : Imam Sajjād (a.s.), has cited an interesting narration which says

Allah has sent down rain from the sky to water the peaks of mountains, and hills," ditches and, on the whole, all sites high or low (saturating them completely). He planned for it to rain continually and gently, with raindrops being individual and separated from each other; sometimes in the form of drizzles or mistlike, and sometimes in the form of

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(Tauhid-i-Mufaddal (Theism), p. ۱, (Persian version ۱ -۱

Other meanings of the sky will be dealt with when discussing verse ۲۹ of the ۲ - ۲ current Sura. Explanation about the atmosphere, when commenting on verse ۲۲, is .helpful, too

(rainfall, in order to let it go down in the soil and saturate and fruits". (۱

Then, the Qur'ān refers to the kinds of fruits and nutritious foods that are produced because of rain and awarded to men as their sustenance. It says : "...wherewith He brings forth fruits for your sustenance;...".

This process of producing fruits is one of the most valuable proofs of His Existence. On one hand, it indicates the vast extent of Allah's Mercy unto all human creatures, and on the other hand, it specifies His Power by which, from colourless water, He can create thousands of colours in fruits and grains whose different properties are useful for men, as well as other living creatures. Hence, immediately after that, it adds:

"...so do not set up rivals with Allah while you know".

Verily, you know that these idols, or partners, which are the creations of your own fancy, have neither created you nor given you sustenance nor any of your bounties. Then, how do you go after those false gods? Do not adopt any equals for Allah and be devoted to Him to translate His Will into a practical life.

Explanation:

Idolatry in Different Forms

It is necessary to note that the false gods are not exclusively wooden or stone idols, or, for example, recognizing a man such as Jesus Christ (a.s.) as one of the trinity, but the concept has a broader scope of meaning. The false gods may be superstitions, self, or even some great or glorious things like rank, position, art, poetry, science, or, kinds of pride which can be the hidden forms of idolatry when they are set up as rivals to Allah. So, in general, knowing anything save Allah, effective in life is a kind of idolatry.

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The Qur'ānic term /samā'/ `sky', wherefrom the rain, for example, comes down, sometimes has the meaning of atmosphere, whose explanation according to some encyclopedias is as follows:

The `atmosphere' is the mass of `air' surrounding the earth to a distance of several hundred kilometers. It appears insubstantial but in reality it has enormous mass. It is not simply a formless mass of gases which can be divided into several layers on the basis of meteorological and electromagnetic considerations, but it consists, roughly, of three major layers which differ widely in their characteristics. These layers are: the troposphere, the stratosphere, and the ionosphere. The troposphere is the layer of air that lies next to and immediately above the earth's surface. The height of the troposphere varies from the poles of the earth to the Equator, being about four or five miles at the poles and about ۱۰ miles at the Equator.

Stratosphere was the term formerly applied to the entire atmosphere above the troposphere. Later it was found that the temperature did vary significantly with the height and also that there existed various stratifications. Some scientists have introduced rather detailed terminology to describe various layers of increasing, decreasing, and constant temperature in the atmosphere and the Ozone layer. But here the distinction will be made between two layers only : the `stratosphere' extending upward from the tropopause to the ionosphere, and the ionosphere, whose lowest ionized layer is found at a height of ۳۵ to ۴۰ miles.

The standard pressure of the atmosphere (۷۶۰ millimeters) is very nearly equal to ۱۰۰۰ ۰۰۰ dynes per square centimeter and is often referred to as the `bar'. The `millibar' is ۱ ۱۰۰۰ of this quantity, sanctioned by the International Meteorological Conferences as the standard for the expression of barometric pressure.

If the atmosphere were of uniform density at a standard pressure of ۷۶۰ millimeters of mercury and at a temperature of OC, its height could easily be calculated based on the weight of a cubic centimeter of air being ۰.۰۰۱۲۹۲۸ grams. The height of such a uniform atmosphere is ۷.۹۹ kilometers (۴.۹۷ miles), and is known as the ` height of

.homogeneous atmosphere ' conveniently useful in certain physical computations

The actual height of the atmosphere is somewhat difficult to determine since it becomes very tenuous at great heights. We may, however, infer its extent from three sources : (۱) the duration of twilight which depends upon scattered sunlight from high atmospheric particles; (۲) the height at which meteors become luminous; and (۳) observation of auroral streamers. Twilight has been observed to exist until the sun is about ۱۸ below the horizon, which, at a latitude of ۴۵, indicates the existence of sufficient atmospheric particles to scatter sunlight at a height of over ۶۰ kilometers (۳۷ miles). Meteors have been observed to become luminous as high as ۳۰۰ kilometers (۱۸۶ miles). Auroral streamers have been seen to stretch upward to a height of ۱۱۰۰ kilometers (۶۸۰ miles). It is very difficult to assign an upper limit to the earth's atmosphere. Atmospheric gases in an exceedingly tenuous condition probably extend .hundreds if not thousands of miles above the earth's surface

This piece is extracted, here, from the Encyclopedia Americana, vol. ۲, p. ۵۰۸; and) .(Encyclopedia International, vol. ۲, p. ۱۶۵

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۲۳ وَ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ فى رَيْبٍ مِمّا نَزَّلْنا عَلى عَبْدِنا فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ مِنْ مِثْلِه وَادْعُوا شُهَداءَ كُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللّهِ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صادِقِينَ

۲۴ فَاِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلُوا وَلَنْ تَفْعَلُوا فَاتَّقُوا النّارَ الَّتى وَقُودُهَا النّاسُ وَالْحِجارَهُ اُعِدَّتْ لِلْكافِرِينَ

۲۳. "And if you are in doubt of what We have sent down to Our (faithful) Servant (Muhammad), then bring forth one Sura the like thereof, and call your witnesses other than Allah, if you are truthful."

۲۴. "And if you do not do so, and you will never do it, then fear the Fire whose fuel is People and Stones, prepared for the infidels."

Commentary : Verses ۲۳-۲۴

Point

After Allah (s.w.t.) explains the state of the hypocrite and disbelievers, and, through the creation of the heaven and the earth, sending down rain and growing plants on the ground, proves the existence of the Creator and Cherisher of the universe, He begins to validate the rightfulness of the Holy Qur'ān and the truthfulness of His Messenger.

In order to show everyone the miraculousness of the Qur'ān with clear evidence, according to one's portion of wit and understanding, that the Qur'ān will be an argument for all, Allah confirms the prophethood of Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) and the authenticity of the Holy Qur'ān by suggesting a challenge, a direct confrontation, not only to all the contemporaries of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) but also to men in all ages. " And if you are in doubt of what We have sent down to Our(faithful) Servant (Muhammad)),..."

It addresses all the rejectors, with a concrete test, saying that if you imagine that the Qur'ān, which has been sent down from Pure Holiness to the chosen servant of Allah in the form of statements and

with the combination of ordinary alphabetical letters, is not from Him and it is the word of a human, then since outwardly you are in the same state from the point of being a human as the Prophet of Islam (p.b.u.h.) is, you should be able to produce a Sura like that of the Qur'ān and call your own witnesses that are like you, the disbelievers of the Qur'ān. You would compare your evidence with one of the Suras of the Qur'ān, even if it be a small one such as Sura Kauthar and the like. If those two were similar in comparison in all their qualities, merits and privileges, you could .rightfully reject the legitimacy of the Qur'ān

The disbelievers and pagan Arabs, who were the masters of literature and eloquence, refrained from accepting this challenge despite their pride and haughtiness in eloquence and avoided the competition. Therefore, inevitably, they turned the literary contest into a bloody battle. Thus, getting killed was easier for them than being disgraced and defeated in a literary contest. The Arab literature became helpless and meagre against the challenge of the Qur'ān. Neither those who lived at the time of the Qur'ān's revelation, nor the people born in the centuries after that could bring anything like this Holy Book, or could do anything against it, inspite of trying with their .utmost strength. They were thus forced to retreat after exerting utmost efforts

? Why is the Holy Qur'ān a Miracle and How

Being complete true revelation, the Qur'ān is itself a miracle. As it is authentically known and also was mentioned in the above, at the time of the Qur'ān's revelation the literary talent and eloquence of Arabs were at their peak, yet the miraculousness of the Qur'ān is not confined to its inimitable literary excellence and eloquence. It stands on its own innumerous different merits some of which are beyond the reach of the complete conception of the literary geniuses of the Arab world. It has such a rhetorical capacity and linguistic excellence that is able to express different views and knowledge in a manner that is understood and appreciated by every rational human being of any standard and accomplishment of all the ages. Then everybody in any time, once provided with the opportunity to become acquainted with the Holy Qur'ān, which offers information by which all of his/her arguments will

be completed, he/she can find himself or herself convinced by it. Such extensive knowledge and such power of expression is beyond the limitations of human ability. ,Even of the literate Arab people

as were previously referred to, especially at the time of the Qur'ān's revelation when the literature of the Arabic language had reached its climax, none dared to bring a Sura similar to even its shortest one. This very single point is the smallest miraculous .aspect of the Qur'ān

There is no doubt that if the Qur'ān were the word of a human and the Prophet (p.b.u.h.), himself, who was known to the world as an illiterate one, had produced it, they would bring many Qur'āns like

it and would prove that this is not the word of Allah revealed to him (p.b.u.h.). In that condition, the enemies of Islam would maintain their works which would be available everywhere and in any ages so that they could publish and distribute them, even now, .to defame the one genuine Qur'ān, but there is none

Apart from its inimitable literary excellence, the Holy Qur'ān with its other names such as `Furqān' and `Tibyān' referring to the abilities it has, presents to the human world definite prophecies fulfilled and yet to be fulfilled, and long after. It contains some facts about endowments in nature which the human knowledge of science as it progresses will have to understand, for its further advancement. The perfectness of such nature, naturally, will be the last word with regard to the ideas, religious and social laws, sciences, and many many other things that it contains and will remain for .ever, until the Hereafter

This universality of the truth expressed in the idea and beauty and the attractive force of the language is so divine that, as we said before, it is beyond the reach of the expressive power of any limited being. It is in this regard that the Holy Qur'ān claims to be not only the word of Allah, inimitable, but the Final Word in respect to truth and justice the better or even the like of it is impossible to be produced by any one. However, it is true to say simply and shortly that the Holy Qur'ān is a miracle with respect to its contents which is the source of all knowledge and science, as it itself

says : " Say : If the sea were ink (wherewith to write out) for the words of my Lord, the sea would surely be consumed before the words of my Lord are exhausted, though ,We were to bring the like of that (sea) to add thereto for its aid", (Sura Al-Kahf

.(No. ۱۸, verse ۱۰۹

Thus, this verse, by itself, is a vital piece of evidence regarding the correctness of the (above stated claim.(۱

? Why do Prophets Need Miracles

We know that the Divine mission of prophethood is a great rank endowed upon some of the purified distinguished members of the human race. Since the purpose of prophethood is the comprehensive guidance ruling over the body and spirit of individuals, and society, toward perfection and the laying down of a legal system and social order for mankind, the assumption of responsibility involved is necessarily heavy and taxing. So, it requires great capacity and energy. Allah, therefore, bestows the position of prophethood on those who have the ability and capacity to receive and follow through the light of revelation. This unique privilege and speciality of prophets is also shown in their miracles, which all of them had. And, to prevent some false, deceitful impostors from claiming the position, it is necessary that, besides the revelation, the real ones should have sufficient evidence to bear testimony to the truth of their declaration and prove the claim that they are sent by Allah. That is, a prophet should utter such words and exhibit such deeds which could not be uttered or performed by any natural means within the power of a finite being, such as : restoring the dead to life again, communicating with animals and inanimate bodies, and the .likes of them. These supernatural events are termed as miracles

The prophet who has a miracle should introduce it to people and invite them to challenge with it. If they can produce none similar to that, thus, by the means of his .miracle, he proves the truthfulness of his declaration

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O' dear respected reader of this book! Have you ever thought that when more ۱ - ۱ than two of the globe is covered with sea water and if we consider it twice as much when we use it entir as ink in order to write out the science and secrets of the Qur'an, i.e. the word of Allah so sooner would the doubled oceans of the globe be exhausted

than would the words of Allah, the science and secrets of the Qur'an? Then be careful when considering how magnificent the Glorious Qur'an is!

! (.The Holy Qur'ān,The Everlasting Miracle of the Prophet of Islam (p.b.u.h

Amongst the miracles issued by the Prophet of Islam (p.b.u.h.), the Qur'ān is the best remaining evidence of his rightfulness. We know, of course, that, according to what the leading scholars of Islam have said, he (p.b.u.h.) had about ۴۴۴۰ miracles. But the Qur'ān is a Book beyond the thoughts and mind of a mortal being. None has been able .to bring one similar to it yet. It is a great heavenly miracle

The reason that amongst all the miracles of the Messenger of Allah (p.b.u.h.) the Qur'ān has been chosen as the greatest remaining evidence of legitimacy of the Prophet of Islam (p.b.u.h.) is that it is a miracle which is `expressive', `everlasting', .'`world-wide', and `spiritual

Each of the former prophets (a.s.) had to accompany his miracle to prove its inimitability when he used to invite his opponents for challenging and bringing the like of it. In fact, his miracle or miracles could not express themselves and it was the explanations of the prophet that would complete them. This statement is also true for .all the miracles of the Prophet of Islam (p.b.u.h.) except the Holy Qur'ān

The Qur'ān is a clear miracle which need not be introduced. It invites others to itself, demands the rejecters to challenge it while it defeats them, condemns them, and it always stands victorious. That is why it, after passing centuries, viz., since the departure of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) up to the present, has been continuing its invitation the same as it did during his lifetime (p.b.u.h). It is both religion and miracle; law, and .the document of the law

The Holy Qur'ān, Global and Eternal

The reputation of the Holy Qur'ān cleft the bonds of time and distance and influenced beyond them. The miracles of the prophets before the Prophet of Islam (p.b.u.h.), and even his own miracles save the Qur'ān, happened in a special period of time, at a definite place and for a specific group of people. For example : the utterances of the holy little child of Virgin Mary, and raising the dead by Jesus (a.s.) were done at some definite times and places before the eyes of some particular

people. And we know that regarding the things that depend on time and place, the farther we move away from them correlatively the weaker they become. This is one .of the properties of affairs related to time

But, the Holy Qur'ān does not depend on time and place. Its brilliance and authority that illuminated the darkness of Arabia fourteen centuries ago continues unwaveringly to shine with its original splendor. Besides that, the passing of time, the advancement of science and the development of information have made it possible for us to understand it and take its advantages even more than the nations of former ages did. It is evident that what time and place cannot influence will continue to be everywhere in the world for eternity. It is also clear that a world-wide everlasting religion should have a world-wide everlasting document of legitimacy in its .possession

: Then we can discuss the Holy Qur'ān

;from the point of modern science

;and the scientific explorations

;and the rotation of the Earth

;and reproduction in the plant kingdom

;and general reproduction in all the particles of the world

;and general gravity

;and the surrendering of the Sun and the Moon

;and the secrets of the creation of mountains

;and the advent of the world

;and the existence of life on other planets

;and the winds, the pollinator of plants

(and the question of the roundness of the Earth; (1)

And many other scientific facts and knowledge about the world

.can be found in the Holy Qur'ān, too

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1- For details, refer to:'The Holy Quran and the Last Prophet(p.b.u.h)' p. 147, (Persian version)

۲۵ وَ بَشِّرِ الَّذينَ امَنُوا وَ عَمِلُوا الصّالِحاتِ اَنَّ لَهُمْ جَنّاتٍ تَجْرى مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهارُ كُلَّما رُزِقُوا مِنْها مِنْ ثَمَرَةٍ رِزْقًا قالُوا هذَا الَّذى رُزِقْنا مِنْ قَبْلُ واُتُوا بِه مُتَشابِهًا و لَهُمْ فيها اَزْواجٌ مُطَهَّرَةٌ وَهُمْ فيها خالِدُونَ

And (O' Muhammad) give glad tidings to those who have Faith and do good deeds " .۲۵ .that for them are gardens beneath which rivers flow

Every time they are provided with fruits therefrom, they shall say : ` This is what we were provided with before! ' and they shall be given the like thereof, and there for ".them shall be spouses purified dwelling therein forever

Commentary : Verse ۲۵

The Specialties of the Bounties in Heaven

Bountiful Gardens

The Specialties of the Bounties in Heaven In the aforementioned verse, the infidels and the rejecters of the Qur'ān were severely threatened with a grave chastisement. Now, in this verse, to make the fact clear, by comparing the destinies of the two contradictory groups, as the style of the Qur'ān is, the destiny of the true believers is .referred to as the antithesis to the painful fate of the disbelievers

First, it says : " And (O' Muhammad) give glad tidings to those who have Faith and do " ... .good deeds that for them are gardens beneath whichrivers flow

We know that those gardens that have not a permanent source of water and need to be occasionally irrigated are not so bountiful and pleasant because of frequent difficulties concerning their upkeeping. The complete freshness is of those gardens which always have enough water easily available and within their reach. The water that belongs to them, making them self-sufficient, will never end. Then drought and shortage of water will never threaten them. The gardens of Heaven

.have such a condition

Then to point out the numerous kinds of fruit in those gardens, it says: "...Every time they are provided with fruits therefrom, they shall say: `This is what we were "...' ! provided with before

The commentators have cited some rather different commentaries concerning this :statement

Some of them have said that the objective meaning of this statement is that these blessings are for the good deeds they did formerly in the world. It was those deeds that were previously sent before them and the path was paved for them in the .Hereafter

The Fruits

Some others have asserted that when the Heavenly fruits are brought for them for the second time, they say that these fruits are the same as they had before, but when they eat them they sense a new taste and a fresh pleasure in them. Or, for example, when we eat grapes and apples in this world, every time we eat them or drink their juices they have basically the same tastes; but the fruits in Heaven will have a different taste every time they will be tasted, although they are apparently alike. This ! is one of the privileges of that world being as if there is no monotony in it

Some have also said that it means that when they see the fruits of Heaven, they find them like the fruits in this world in order not to be odd and curious for them, but when .they eat them they sense the flavor quite newly-tasting and excellent

There is no controversy that the above statement refers to all these meanings and even to some other interpretations beyond them, because the words of the Qur'ān .sometimes bear several meanings

"...,Then it adds : "...and they shall be given the like thereof

That is, from the point of beauty and wholesomeness, all of the various Heavenly

fruits are alike and they are at such a high standard that none of them can be preferred over others. They are not like the fruits in this world that some may be too ripe or aromatic while some others are, for example, too green or tasteless. The fruits in the gardens of Heaven, likening them with those of this world, are all pleasantly .fragrant, delicious, wholesome, and beautifully interesting

Purified Spouses

And finally, the last bounty, which is referred to in this verse, is` purified spouses ', :where it says

"...and there for them shall be spouses purified ..."

The spouses are purified and are free from all the dirt and taints, bodily and spiritually, which they may have in this world.

One of the problems that man is confronted with, concerning the bounties in this world, is that at the same time that he possesses a bounty he thinks of its perdition and is worried about the time he is going to be in lack of it. For this very reason, the bounties in this world can never produce real tranquility for him. But the bounties in Heaven are eternal. They have no end and no perdition or discontinuation. They are full, complete, soothing and calming. So, to confirm this meaning, at the end of the verse, it says about the believers:

"dwelling therein forever ...".

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Occasion of Revelation:

On the occasion of the revelation of this verse, the leading commentators have narrated from Ibn-Abbas as saying : " This verse has been revealed on the virtue of Hadrat Ali-ibn Abitālib (a.s.) and the true believers", (1) (since they have both `Faith' and `good deeds').

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Explanations:

1. Faith and Deeds

In many of the verses in the Qur'ān, `Faith' and `good deeds' are mentioned to be so closely together that they seem to be inseparable. True, it is so because Faith and practice are complementary to each other.

If Faith influences the depths of man's soul, its radiance will certainly reflect in his acts and cause his deeds to become `good deeds'. It is like a room wherein a bright light is

kindled whose beams radiate outside through all the doors and windows. The same is the bright light of the lamp of Faith when it is glowing inside a man's enlightened .heart

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Tafsir-us-Safi, vol. ۱, p. ۸۹, and Tafsir-i-Burhan, vol. ۱, p. ۷۰ -۱

If this occurs, the light of that brilliant lamp of Faith radiates from his eyes, ears, .tongue, hands and feet

Sura At-Ṭalāq, No. ۶۵, verse ۱۱ says: "... And those who believe in Allah and work righteousness, He will admit to Gardens beneath which rivers flow, to dwell therein "...for ever

Also, Sura An-Nur, No. ۲۴, verse ۵۵ says: " Allah has promised, to those among you who believe and work righteous deeds, that He will, of a surety, grant them in the "...(land, inheritance (of power

Fundamentally, `Faith' is as the root of a plant, and `good deeds' are its fruit. The existence of pleasant sweet fruit shows evidence to the soundness of the root which .causes that useful fruit to be produced

Some unbelieving persons may occasionally do some good deeds but that act will surely not be performed continuously. What is noble and certain to bring forth good deeds is the Faith that has penetrated the depths of man's soul and causes him/her to .have a feeling of responsibility

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The Purified Spouses .۲

It is interesting that the only epithet that is mentioned in this verse to qualify the Heavenly spouses is the attribute of `purified'. This is an indication to the idea that the first and the most important status of a spouse is `purity', and all good qualities other than that are totally outshown by its radiance. The well-known tradition that is narrated from the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) makes this fact even clearer. He has said : " Avoid the green plants grown over dunghill". The Messenger of Allah (p.b.u.h.) was asked what he meant by `the green plants grown over dunghill', and he answered : " (It is the beautiful women who have grown up among filthy family members."(۱

The word /azwāj/ in the plural means mates or wives which in the case of the female sex means husbands. This may mean the faithful wives of the faithful husbands i.e.,

women who had been true and faithful believers in the truth and who had been the wives of the men

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Wasa'il-ush-Shi'ah, vol. ۱۴, p. ۱۹ -۱

.who were also believers

However, the women in Heaven, whether they are `houri' (angels) or `human creatures', are purified and clean both from the point of outward dirt such as : blood, urine, feces, semen, menstruation, postpartal bleeding, excessive menstruation, dirtiness, and the like; and from the point of inward dirt such as : bad qualities of character, evil dispositions like : rancour, grudges, envy, habitual frowning, and the like of them; and also from the point of some hideous behaviours like : adultery, fornication, and all kinds of similar vices. They, having the total aspects and conditions .of purification, are clean from all sorts of corruption and possess purity in its entirity

Sa`īd-ibn-`Āmir has narrated a tradition from the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) which says : " If one of the women of Heaven looks once towards the earth the whole world will be full of perfume of musk and the radiance of her light will prevail over the light of the sun and the moon". (١)

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The Material and Spiritual Blessings in Heaven .٣

In many of the verses of the Qur'ān the words are about the blessings of Heaven, bounties such as : gardens beneath which rivers flow, castles, purified spouses, .numerous fruits, loyal and faithful companions, etc

But, besides these bounties, some other excellent blessings are also mentioned whose splendour and magnificence is impossible to be estimated with the worldly criteria that we have. For example, Sura At-Taubah, No. ٩, verse ٧٢ says : " Allah has promised to Believers, men and women, Gardens under which rivers flow, to dwell therein, and beautiful mansions in Gardens of everlasting bliss. But the greatest bliss ".is the Good Pleasure of Allah : that is the supreme felicity

And, in Sura Al-Bayyinah, No. ٩٨, verse ٨, after mentioning some material blessings in Heaven, it says : "...Allah is well-pleased with them and they are well-pleased with "...Him

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۱- Manhaj-us-Sadiqeen, vol. ۱ p. ۱۹۹

And truly, if a person reaches the position that he feels his Lord is pleased with him and he is also pleased with Him, he will dismiss all other pleasures. He will attach only to Him and will think of none else. This is a spiritual pleasure that cannot be described .with any words nor in any language

Finally, since the Resurrection has both `spiritual' and `physical' aspects, the bounties in bliss have both of those aspects, too, in order that their comprehensiveness be established and everyone, according to his/her worthiness and eligibility, will enjoy .them

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۲۶ اِنَّ اللّهَ لا ـ يَسْتَحى اَنْ يَضْرِبَ مَثَلاً ـ ما بَعُوضَةً فَما فَوْقَها فَاَمَّا الَّذينَ امَنُوا فَيَعْلَمُونَ اَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَاَمَّا الَّذينَ كَفَرُوا فَيَقُولُونَ
ماذا اَرادَ اللّهُ بِهذا مَثَلاً يُضِلُّ بِه كَثيراً وَ يَهْدى بِه كَثيراً وَ ما يُضِلُّ بِه اِلاَّ الْفاسِقينَ

Allah does not disdain to set forth the parable even of a gnat, or anything greater " .۲۶
.than that. As for those who have Faith, they know that it is the truth from their Lord

' ?And for those who reject Faith, they ask : ` What does Allah mean by this parable

Thereby He leads many astray and guides many, and He leads none astray save the
."transgressors

Commentary : Verse ۲۶

Point

The purpose of a parable is to make the meaning of an abstract idea more clear and explicit with the help of a material thing in order to assist the mind in catching the idea through consideration. The more man's wisdom is dependent on his base understanding, the less vigorous strength he has to conceive the spirit and reality of things when his imagination interferes. That is why that in the Divine Book and in the words of the wise and men of letters, the essence of meanings are stated in the form of parables to make complicated concepts plain, hence through a logical thing find a .way to the philosophical

The Parable of the Gnat

A `gnat' is a small insect which is perceptible by the naked eye. Gnat is mentioned in this verse, perhaps, to show that striking a similitude between small things or beyond it is not inappropriate for the Glorious Dignity of the Essence of Allah, but to confirm that the proportion of His Sovereignty is the same over big or small, high or low and, in general, all are encompassed by His Power and are benefited by His endless Mercy and Grace. Furthermore, if we observe carefully, we will see that all the creatures, whether complex or simple, like a chain, are linked to one another. They are so interrelated and perform their

duties with such surprising harmony and regularity that it is as if they have formed a .single unit to take part in a general service

The term `gnat', in this verse, may refer to the greatness and fairness that is used in .the creation of a gnat, this very small creature

Concerning this meaning, there is a tradition from Imam Ṣādiq(a.s.) who said : " Verily, Allah (s.w.t.) has set forth a parable of a gnat because He has created `gnat', with that small size it has, consisting of all that He has created in `an elephant' with that bigness it possesses, and He has added two other limbs (for gnat) in order to stimulate (the attention of) the believers to notice the delicacy and frailness of His (creation and His wonderful production." (١

In another occurrence in the Qur'ān, He (s.w.t.) has said: " Do they not look at camels, .(how they are created ? ", (Sura Al-Qāshiyah, No. ٨٨, verse ١٧

Upon the importance of the intriguing creation of living creatures, Amir-ul-Mu'mineen :Ali (a.s.) in one of his sermons has said

How could it be ? Even if all the animals of the earth whether birds or beasts,..." stabled cattle or pasturing ones, of different origins and species, dull people and sagacious men all jointly try to create (even) `a gnat' they are not able to bring it into being and do not understand what is the way to its creation. Their wits are bewildered and wandering. Their powers fall short and fail, and they return disappointed and tired, knowing that they are defeated and admitting their inability to produce it, also "... .realizing that they are too weak (even) to destroy it

: The verse continues saying

"... .As for those who have Faith, they know that it is the truth from their Lord ..."

Those who have believed in Islam and accepted the Word of Allah know that these miraculous statements are issued from the Origin of revelation. They know quite well that these parables are vivid and appropriate and are revealed from their Lord. They conceive the fact in this way because their hearts are empty of envy,grudges and

.pride and their souls are the site of the light of illumination and knowledge

p:۱۳۰

Nur-uth-Thaqalayn- vol. ۱, p. ۴۶, Tradition ۶۵ ۱ -۱

?And for those who reject Faith, they ask : ` What does Allah mean by this parable..."
"...'

Those who have disbelieved and covered the light of Faith with the curtain of infidelity have ultimately blinded their own insight. They have made their ears, which were able to hearken to the Divine Words, deaf. They, ignorantly or mockingly, inquire that what was Allah's aim by giving this for a similitude that He causes many to err by it and .many He leads aright

In Tafsīr-ut-Tibyān, vol. ١, page ١٩, Shaykh Ṭūsī says : " It is like that a speaker asks what Allah means by this parable that thereby some may be led astray and some be guided. In answer to this question, Allah says that none will be led astray save the transgressors; but the way is open to the believers to reach the climax of ".understanding and conception with knowledge and true Faith

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Occasion of the Revelation

When the previous verses, i.e., the verses that say : " The likeness of them is as the likeness of a man who kindled a fire..." and " Or (their) likeness is as a rainstorm from the heaven...", (٢:١٧,١٩) were revealed, the hypocrites said that Allah is much exalted to : bring forth these parables. So, to refuse their guise and statements, it says

Allah does not disdain to set forth the parable even of a gnat or anything greater " ".than that

: Explanation

Some commentators have cited their ideas about the verse under discussion as : follows

The Arabic term /yudillu/ means : `misleading'. Wherever this word is used in the Qur'ān, relating to Allah, it means the withdrawal of His Grace and allowing the individual to have the way of his own choice as a punishment, consequent to the

individual's rejecting the

p:۱۳۱

.Divine Guidance voluntarily offered to him

The Holy Qur'ān presents the justification to the frequent metaphorical expressions in the form of parables, to stimulate the human mind and heart. The result is obvious: that a healthy mind grasps the Truth whereas the perverted mind increases its doubts as to what Allah meant by the parable. Thus the one and the same expression has two opposite effects. The right impression is `guidance' /hidāyat/ which is assigned to ` the pious ' /muttaqīn/, and the wrong impression is /dalālat/ ` going astray ' which is allotted to the wrong-doers, and pointed out in the next verse. The two important characteristics of the wrong-doers are: the breach of the Covenant of Allah, after it has been confirmed and /qata`a mā amarallāh/ i.e., the severing of the relation or the connection with what Allah has commanded man to establish, and .doing things subversive and harmful to the harmonious life on earth

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۲۷ اَلَّذینَ یَنْقُضُونَ عَهْدَ اللّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ میثاقِهِ وَ یَقْطَعُونَ ما اَمَرَ اللّهُ بِه اَنْ یُوصَلَ وَیُفْسِدُونَ فِی الْاَرْضِ اُول-ئِکَ هُمُ الْخاسِرُونَ

Those who break the covenant of Allah after its confirmation and cut asunder " .۲۷ what Allah has commanded to be joined, and they make corruption on the Earth; they ."are the losers

Commentary : Verses ۲۷

! The Real Losers

In the aforementioned verse, the subject was partly based on the wrong-doers and their mischievous deeds. In this verse, these people are introduced clearly by three : qualities

: Referring to the first quality it says

"...Those who break the covenant of Allah after its confirmation "

Then, it refers to their second quality, saying : "... and cut asunder what Allah has "... ,commanded to be joined

Many of the commentators have pointed out that this verse refers especially to the desertion of kinsfolk and breaking off ties of relationship. But careful attention to the concept of the verse leads us to a broader and more general meaning, in which the desertion of kinsfolk is one of its examples. The evidence that supports the above idea is that the verse indicates that the makers of corruption cut the ties that Allah has commanded to remain fixed and firm. These joining ties cover the union of kindred, meeting of friends, social relationships, connections with the divine leaders, and relation with Allah. Therefore, we should not confine the meaning of the verse to a .single idea alone

In some Islamic narrations, however, the phrase : `What Allah has commanded to be joined' is rendered in connection with Amir-ul- Mu'mineen Imām Ali (a.s.) and the .(.entire Ahlul-Bait, the immaculate,(a.s

The third quality of the makers of corruption on the earth, which is lastly referred to in "... ;this verse, is : "...and they make corruption on the Earth

It is, of course, evident that they have neglected the path of Allah and disobeyed Him. These disbelievers, who do not observe mercy even towards their relatives, certainly treat others with cruelty. They pursue their own pleasures and personal interests. It does not matter to them where the society may be led. Their central aim is to increase their profit and to obtain their desires. They do not care if they must do any wrong or commit any offense to reach their goals. It is obvious how destructive the result of .this kind of thinking and acting may be in the society

: The Qur'ān, at the end of this verse, says

".they are the losers ..."

Truly, it is so. What a greater loss than this that a man spends his entire physical and ! spiritual capital on the way to the destruction and disaster of his own life

What fate can they have save this dreadful one when some people step out of the circle of obedience to Allah's Command to the extent of the meaning of the term /fisq/ ? ' ` mischief

Mischief', in Islam, is one the most abhored crimes, as the Qur'ān says : " Mischief is` more grievous than murder ", (۲:۲۱۷). This is one of the many indications that Islam .stands for peace on earth and never tolerates anything which disturbs it

۲۸ کَیفَ تَکْفُرُونَ بِاللّهِ وَ کُنْتُمْ اَمْواتًا فَاَحْیاکُمْ ثُمَّ یُمیتُکَمْ ثُمَّ یُحْییکَمْ ثُمَّ اِلَیْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ

۲۹ هُوَ الَّذی خَلَقَ لَکُمْ ما فِی الْاَرْضِ جَمیعًا ثُمَّ اسْتَوی اِلَی السَّماءِ فَسَوّیهُنَّ سَبْعَ سَمواتٍ وَ هُوَ بِکُلِّ شیْ ءٍ عَلیمٌ

۲۸. " How can you deny Allah and you were dead and He gave you life, then He will cause you to die, then again restore you to life, and unto Him you will be returned ? " (Therefore, neither your life nor your death is in your will; what you have is Allah's.)

۲۹. " It is He Who created for you all that is in the earth; then turned (His Will) to heaven and fashioned it into seven heavens, for He is All-Knowing of all things."

Commentary : Verses ۲۸-۲۹

The Mysterious Bounty of Life !

In these couple of verses, through a series of the Divine blessings and some of the marvelous phenomena of creation, the Holy Qur'ān attracts man's attention to the Lord of the world and His Magnificent Sovereignty. It very clearly completes the undisputable evidence set forth for the acknowledgment of Allah's Omnipotence, that was previously cited in verses ۲۱ and ۲۲.

It must be remembered that the correct conception of Allah is the basic need for proper faith. This faith serves as guidance from the main generative source (Allah) for the whole system of religion. The most practical method of acquiring this basic knowledge about the existence of the Essence of Allah is to carefully observe and thoughtfully reflect on the creation which is before our own eyes. This is a point that nobody can deny or express any doubt about. This method is repeatedly impressed and demanded in the Holy Qur'ān. The course adopted in the Holy Qur'ān to educate man is the most scientific

.and the most modern one, i.e. of proceeding from the concrete to the abstract

At first it inquires : " How can you deny Allah and you were dead and He gave you "...,life

The Qur'ān reminds all individuals that formerly they were inanimate like the pieces of stone, wood, and the like of them. The water of life had not been poured on you and the breeze of vitality had not blown through the garden of your being to open the .blossom of your lifetime in the realm of your entity

Now, you are gifted with the bounty of life and you are actually living. Numerous organs and limbs, and various integral systems of sensing to form conceptions are bestowed upon you. Who has given you this very blessing of life and being ? Did you yourself give it to your own self ? It is clear that every rational person will unhesitately confess that this blessing is not from his own origin, but it has come from a

knowing, mighty source, the One Who knows all its secrets and its complicated arrangements; and Who is able to design it totally. In this case there will arise the .question of why you deny the One Who has granted you life

Today, it has been proven by the scientists of the world that there is not anything more complicated than the phenomenom of life. Man has surprisingly gained a great deal of successful progress in

the field of science, in general, and experimental natural science, in particular, but the secret of the riddle of life has not been uncovered yet. This subject is so mysterious that it has remained inexplicable for millions of learned individuals whose thoughts and efforts have been left fruitless in conceiving it. Possibly, in the future, under the light of further scientific development, man will gradually become more acquainted with the secrets of life. But the main question is : Can anybody ascribe such an extraordinarily delicate and precise phenomenom, which is full of mysteries and is in need of superior knowledge and power for itself, to the irrational nature, which itself ? does not have `life' from its own

That is why we say the phenomenom of life, in the world of nature, is the greatest evidence for the affirmation of the existence of Allah about which abundant books have been compiled. The

.Qur'ān, in the above verse, emphasizes on the very matter, too

After the citation of this bounty, it refers to another vivid example, i.e., the : phenomenom of death. It says

"... ,then He will cause you to die..."

Everybody usually sees that his relatives, kinsfolk, acquaintances, companions, and friends die one after another, and their lifeless bodies are buried in the soil. This actual circumstance is also a station of contemplation : Who took their beings from them ? If their beings were theirs by themselves, they would be eternal. When it is taken from .them, it is further proof that life is bestowed upon them by someone else

True, the ` Bestower of life ' is the ` Bestower of death ', as the Qur'ān says : " He Who created Death and Life, that He may try which of you is best in deed ...", (Sura Al-Mulk, No. ۶۷, verse ۲). The Qur'ān, after providing these two clear statements as proof for the Essence of Allah in order to make the soul of man disposed to grasp other problems, refers to the subject of Resurrection and being restored to life after death. "... ,It says : "...then again restore you to life

This phenomena of life after death, indeed, is not so surprising because it is not unfamiliar and man has formerly seen the same situation in nature. Therefore, regarding the first statement, viz. `the enlivening of the inanimate', the acceptance of raising the dead after the decomposition of the body, it is not so difficult, but it is easier than the first time He created man; (although the easiness and hardness is .(meaningless for the Essence Whose Power is infinite

It is odd that there have been some people who have been doubtful about man's life .after death. They believe that the first life has originated from some inanimate things

It is interesting that the above verse has made everything, from the beginning to the end, manifest before the eyes of man. In a short argument, it has expressed the advent of life to its last point in this world, death, and then the Resurrection is .illustrated for him

The objective meaning of the phrase " Unto Him you will be returned " is returning to

Allah's blessings; that is, you will return to the blessings of Allah in the Hereafter. The witness to this meaning is Sura Al-'An`am, No. ۶, verse ۳۶ which says : "... As to the dead, Allah will raise them up; then will they be turned unto Him."

p:۱۳۷

The objective of " Unto Him you will be returned " may be a reality more delicate and fragile than that. It is to say that : all creatures, in the process of development, begin from the station of non-existence, the zero point, and go forth towards `infinite', which is the Pure Essence of Allah. Thus, the path of development does not end with death, but, in the Hereafter, man will continue his life again, miserably, or prosperously with a higher standard of living to pave the path of his further .development

: Conclusion

The Arabic term /kuntum/, (the second person plural), applied in the above verse, may address the human ego which was not as it is now as a conscious entity. The previous state is termed as `being dead', brought into the present conscious state, by Allah's means of `enlivening'. The departure of the conscious self from the body, is termed death appointed by Allah. The state of the human cognitive self, after its departure from the body, is termed as the `enlivening' and from that state proceeding to the other states, up to the Infinite point of the return to Allah. This shows that once our life begins, there is no reversion or regression. It is the continuous process from one state to the next, dying from the previous state and entering life into the succeeding one. Be the succeeding state pleasant or painful, it is the evolutionary consequence of .the preceding state

Also, this single verse alone denotes the continuous evolutionary transformation and the transcendence of a conscious human entity up to the communion with the Infinite, not in the sense of annihilation or the absorption of the finite into the infinite, but in the sense of the realization of the fact that nothing is real but the One, the Cause of all .causes : the Essence of Allah, the Exalted

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After mentioning the blessing of life and pointing to the ` Origin and End ', it refers to another Divine bounty from among the immense bounties of Allah. It says : " It is He "... ,Who created for you all that is in the earth

In this manner, it specifies the worthiness of the existence of man and his high mastership over all beings in the earth. It is just this very matter that clarifies for us that Allah has created Man for a very worthy and magnificent affair. It is so important, that everything in the world is created for him! What is he created for? Yes, he is the most excellent being in the world of existence and the worthiest of all. A partial explanation will also be provided when commenting on verses ۳۰-۳۳ of the current .Sura

It is not this verse alone that defines the majestic position of Man but there are also abundant verses in the Holy Qur'ān that reveal the same and introduce Man as the main goal of the whole world of creation; for example : " And He has subjected to you, as from Him, all that is in the heavens and on the earth : ...", (Sura Al-Jāthiyah, No. .(۴۵,verse ۱۳

: Some further instances from the verses of the Holy Qur'ān are as follows

.(Who hath made the ships subject to you, ...", (۱۴: ۳۲..."

.(And the rivers (also) hath He made subject to you...", (۱۴: ۳۲..."

.(And the Night and the Day hath He also made subject to you." (۱۴: ۳۳..."

.(It is Allah Who has subjected the sea to you, ...", (۴۵: ۱۲ "

And He hath made subject to you the sun and the moon, ...", (Sura Ebrahīm, No. ۱۴, " .(verse ۳۳

On this subject, we will have some explanations later, too, when commenting upon .Sura Ar-Ra`d, No. ۱۳, verse ۲, and Sura Ebrāhīm No. ۱۴, verses ۳۲ and ۳۳

Again, it turns to the concept of monotheism and says : "...then turned (His Will) to ".heaven and fashioned it into seven heavens; for He is All-knowing of all things

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: The Seven Firmaments

The word /samā'/, as oppose to /'ard/ `the earth', in the lexicon means : `to be lofty, upward'. This is a collective meaning which encompasses numerous concepts, in which some of the dimensions were formerly mentioned.(۱) But what is the objective meaning of the phrase `seven heavens' here? The Islamic scholars and the commentators of the Holy Qur'ān have offered different arguments on the subject, but the important idea which seems to be the most correct is that the purpose of .'`seven heavens' is its very actual meaning of `seven firmaments

Yet, from the verses of the Qur'ān, it is understoond that the whole of celestial bodies : planets and fixed stars that we can see, are totally in the first heaven, and there are six other heavens that are not visible to us and even our modern scientific equipment are not able to show them. Therefore, there are, on the whole, seven firmaments (which make up the very `seven heavens'. (۲

The evidence to this statement is the words of the Qur'ān where it says : "...And We .(adorned the lower heaven with lights,...", (Sura Al-Fuṣṣilat, No. ۴۱, verse ۱۲

In another occurrence it says : " We have indeed decked the lower heaven with .(beauty (in) the stars,...",(Sura Aṣ-Ṣāffāt, No. ۳۷, verse ۶

These verses clearly indicate that what we see in the sky, which are generally called stars, are completely located in the first heaven. Beyond this heaven, there are six .other heavens about whose details we do not have any exact data at present

The reason why we said that there are six other heavens which are unknown to us yet, and science may realize them in the future, is that human knowledge is still incomplete. The more developed it becomes, the more new surprising facts about the creation it discovers. For instance, the science of astronomy has now reached a point where earthly telescopes are incompetent and satellites equipped with

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For the word /sama / in the sense of atmosphere, look at the commentary on ۱ - ۱

verse ۲۲ Sura Baqarah, this vol. , pp. ۱۱۳-۱۱۴

An imaginary, approximately similar meaning to this idea is seen in Milton, Pardise ۲ -۲
.Lost, iii ۵۶, ۴۸۱. The same imagery will be found in Dante

powerful radars and specific means for the purpose, are utilized instead. What the great astronomical observatories and the modern equipment with the help of spacecrafts and scientific excavations have discovered, in the Arc of Descent, is a distance as far as about one thousand million (a billion) light years away from us wherein they have discovered innumerable solar systems other than ours. The astronomers themselves have confessed that this is just the beginning of the way of the world, not the end of it, and the discovery of further such systems is yet expected with the successful invention of or the enhanced structure of stronger telescopes or more advanced means of celestial excavations. Therefore, there is no doubt that, in the future, with the further progress in astronomy and science, other galaxies and .firmaments, or the like, might be discovered

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Verses ۳۰–۳۳; Arabic and English Translation

۳۰ وَ اِذْ قالَ رَبُّکَ لِلْمَلٰئِکَهِ اِنّی جاعِلٌ فِی الْأَرْضِ خَلیفَهً قالُوا اَتَجْعَلُ فیها مَنْ یُفْسِدُ فیها وَیَسْفِکُ الدِّماءَ وَ نَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِکَ وَ
نُقَدِّسُ لَکَ قالَ اِنّی اَعْلَمُ مالا تَعْلَمُونَ

۳۱ وَعَلَّمَ ادَمَ الْأَسْماءَ کُلَّها ثُمَّ عَرَضَهُمْ عَلَی الْمَلٰئِکَهِ فَقالَ اَنْبِؤُنی بِاَسْماءِ هؤُلاءِ اِنْ کُنْتُمْ صادِقینَ

۳۲ قالُوا سُبْحانَکَ لا عِلْمَ لَنا اِلاّ ما عَلَّمْتَنا اِنَّکَ اَنْتَ الْعَلیمُ الْحَکیمُ

۳۳ قالَ یا ادَمُ اَنْبِئْهُمْ بِاَسْمائِهِمْ فَلَمّا اَنْبَأَهُمْ بِاَسْمائِهِمْ قالَ اَلَمْ اَقُلْ لَکُمْ اِنّی اَعْلَمُ غَیْبَ السَّمواتِ وَ الْأَرْضِ وَ اَعْلَمُ ما تُبْدُونَ وَ ما
کُنْتُمْ تَکْتُمُونَ

۳۰. " When your Lord said to the angels : ` I am appointing on the earth a deputy', they said: ` Will you place therein one who will make mischief therein and shed blood, while we celebrate Your Praise and extol Your Holiness? ' He said: `Assuredly I know what you know not'."

۳۱. " And He taught Adam all the names, then He presented them before the angels, and said: `Tell Me the names of these if you are right'."

۳۲. " They said: ` Glory be to You! Of knowledge we have naught save what you have taught us. Surely, you (alone) are the All-Knowing, the All-Wise'."

۳۳. " He said: ` O' Adam, tell them their names'. And when he had

told them their names, He said: `Did I not say unto you that I surely know the unseen things of the heavens and the earth, and (that) I know what you reveal and what you were hiding?' "

Commentary : Verses ۳۰–۳۳

! Man, Allah's Deputy on Earth

Through the previous verses we have understood that Allah has created all the endowments on the earth for Man, whereas in these verses the leadership and vicegerency of Man is formally proclaimed. Thus, here, Man's spiritual rank and .worthiness of all these merits, are exposed

In these verses, which begin from verse No. ۳۰ and end with verse ۳۹, the creation of Adam (the first human) is referred to and the following three fundamental subjects :are set forth

Allah informs the angels about man's vicegerency on the earth and their . ۱ .questioning of Him

Angels are commanded to prostrate before the first human, Adam. This situation is .۲ referred to in numerous verses in the Holy Qur'ān concerning different .circumstances

The illustration of the situation of Adam and his life in Heaven and the events . ۳ causing him to be sent out from Heaven, and then, his repentance and the order that .he and his children were to live on the earth, are pointed out

The verses under discussion speak about the first stage. It was His Will, so He created a being on the earth to be His vicegerent. The attributes of this deputy would be a reflection from the rays of Allah's Attributes, and his position somehow higher than that of the angels. It was His Will that the earth and all its endowments, i.e. forces, .treasures, mines, and all its potentials be subjected to the will of such a human being

Such a being must have a vast share of wisdom, intelligence, conception and a special capacity so that he can undertake the leadership and mastership of the earthly .beings

:Therefore, in the first verse, it says

:When your Lord said to the angels "

"...,' I am appointing on the earth a deputy `

According to what the leading Islamic scholars and learned men, and experts in commentary, have said, the objective meaning of

khalīfah' (deputy) is the divine vicegerent on the earth, because the question which` the angels asked later, saying that the human race may make mischief and shed blood on the earth while they (the angels) celebrate His Praise, reinforces this very .meaning, that Allah's vicegerency on the earth is incompatible with these deeds

Also, teaching the names to Adam, whose explanation you will read in the following verses, is good evidence supporting this claim. Again, the angels' humility and veneration before Adam is

.another witness to this idea

However, Allah was pleased to create a being above all the creatures of the universe, the best creation, appropriate for being a Divine vicegerent, Allah's Deputy on the .Earth

Commenting on these verses, Imam Ṣādiq (a.s.) in a tradition has referred to the same meaning and said that the angels, after recognizing the position of Adam, realized that he and his children were deserving to be the deputies of Allah on the (earth and serve as His guidance among peoples.(١

Then, in the current verse, the angels put forth a question, in order to understand the : reality and not to protest, as it says

they said: `Will You place therein one who will make mischief therein and shed..." blood, ..." "...while we celebrate Your Praise and extol Your Holiness? '..." But, here in this verse, Allah's answer to them is a complicated reply whose details will be given in ".' later verses. "...He said: ` Assuredly I know what you know not

As it is realized from their words, the angels had comprehended that this human was not a docile one : he makes mischief, sheds blood, does wrong, etc. But how did they ?know it

It is sometimes said that Allah had previously told the angels the future of Man in brief, while some others have cited that maybe the angels had comprehended the idea themselves from the term /fil'ard/ (on the earth). They knew that Man would be

created from soil; and, because of the complexity of `matter' , naturally it is the center of conflict and difficulties. For, this limited world of matter cannot satiate

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Tafsir-i-Almizan, vol. ۱, p. ۱۲۱ ۱ -۱

the avaricious nature of human beings, even if the whole world were given to a single one, he would not be satisfied. This status can sometimes be the main cause of .mischief and bloodshed particularly when there is not enough sense of responsibility

Some of the other commentators believe that the predication of the angels resulted from the fact that Adam was not the first human creature on the earth, but, before him, there had also been some other humans who had lived on the earth and had committed corruption and shed blood. This bad record caused the angels' suspicion .about Adam and his descendants

These three commentaries are not so contradictory to one another; viz, they, comprehensively, may have caused the attention of the angels to be attracted towards this subject. And, incidentally, this fact that they expressed was never denied by their Lord in His answer to them, but, besides this fact, He pointed out that there were some other more important facts about man and his capabilities that the angels .did not know

They thought that if the purpose were only for worshipping and servitude, they would be the best examples, because they were always praising Him and were the most appropriate ones for being the vicegerents! They did not consider that when lusts, wrath and various desires have no chance to influence on their behaviours and selves, their worshipping is different from the servitude and worshipping of Man whose lusts and desires have surrounded him and Satan's temptations attack him from every side. What a long distance there is between the obedience of this feeble !being and the adoration of those holy and pure angels

They did not know that in the seed of Adam there would come such great prophets as Mohammad (p.b.u.h.), Abraham (a.s.), Noah (a.s.), Moses (a.s.), Jesus (a.s.), and some Imams as the twelve sinless Imams (Ahlul-Bait) (a.s.) in addition to many pious believers, martyrs, and a great many men and women who lovingly donated the whole of their properties in the way of Allah. There would be some offsprings of Adam whose one hour of contemplation is equal to years of worshipping of the angels. It is noteworthy that the angels emphasized on three aspects

about their characteristics: /tasbīḥ/ (glorification), /ḥamd/ (praise, eulogy) and /taqdīs/ (sanctification). Undoubtedly, both the first and the second mean : celebrating His Praises and knowing Him and His Glory absolutely pure and perfect, free from any impurity or imperfection or from anything derogatory. But what is the main objective meaning of /taqdīs/ `sanctification'? Some have considered it as the purification of Allah from any imperfection which is, in fact, an emphasis again on the very meaning .'of /tasbīḥ/ `glorification

Some others believe that the term /taqdīs/ is derived from the root /quds/ which means: ` to purify the earth from the wicked and corruptors', or ` to purify oneself from anything bad, evil and immoral in order to clarify the soul and body for the sake of Allah '. They have considered the term /laka/ (for you) in the phrase /nuqaddisu-laka/, ` we extol Your Holiness (for you) ', as its witness. The angels did not say: `we extol You', but they meant to say: `we purify ourselves and assist those who obey .'You, for You, or towards You

In fact, they wanted to say: if the purpose is obedience and servitude, they are obedient; and if it is worship, they are always busy doing it; and if the purpose is the purification of themselves or throughout the expanse of the earth, they are doing that too. But this matter-made human is both immoral, himself, and makes mischief on the .earth

To clarify the facts completely for the angels. He set them on trial in order that they themselves might confess that there was a great difference between them and .Adam

Angels on Trial

Adam, being given effective faculties by Divine favour, had an extraordinary receptive :potential for the facts of the world of being, and as the Qur'ān says

"... ,And He taught Adam all the names "

The commentators, from the point of view of their various styles of commentary, have delivered different ideas on the phrase `teaching names', but it is certain that its

aim is not that of teaching some insignificant words or meaningless `names', because this could not be

p:۱۴۶

counted an honour for Adam. The aim is teaching the nature of these names and the .concepts and the things that they refer to

Of course, this acknowlegement of the nature and the facts of the world of creation and the secrets of the world of being with its different properties in different (creatures, was a great honour for Adam.(١

It is narrated in a tradition that Imam Ṣādiq (a.s.) was asked about the meaning of this verse and he (a.s.) said: " The purpose (of names) is: lands, mountains, valleys, riverbeds (and on the whole, all things). Then he looked at the rug under him and said ".that even that rug was among the things He taught Adam

Therefore `teaching names' has not been something like teaching words but it refers to the philosophy and secrets of the properties and qualities of things. He taught Adam this knowledge in order that he could use the merits and advantages of this .world alongside the path of his development towards perfection

He (s.w.t.) also taught him the capacity of language learning and the skill of writing with its proper application to be able to nominate objects and whenever he needs them, instead of showing them, he merely calls their names. This is a very great bounty of the Lord bestowed on man. We can comprehend the importance of this subject when we observe that what modern science and human beings have is under the shade of the existence of language and writing. All the scientific and cultural, historical ancient records have been kept and preserved as treasures in man's written collections generation after generation. If he could not use language and pen, it would be impossible for him to convey the knowledge and experimental data from old .generations to the recent nations and the coming ones

then He presented them before the angels, and said: `Tell Me the names of these if ..." ".'you are right

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But the angels, who were in lack of such knowledge, failed in that trial and could not

:pass the divine examination successfully. So, their response to Him was such

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Majma-ul-Bayan, vol. ۱, p. ۷۶ -۱

They said: ` Glory be to You ! Of knowledge we have naught save what You have "
."taught us. ..." "...Surely, You (alone) are the All-Knowing, the All-Wise

They said that they did not know anything regarding this matter and their question was simply because of their lack of knowledge. They were unaware of the capacity and wonderful power of Adam (a.s.), his God-given endowment. It was a great privilege to him above the angels. They accepted that Adam (a.s.) really deserved to be the vicegerent of Allah on the earth and in the world of all beings, where without .him, the whole creation would remain incomplete

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Then, it was Adam's turn, by the command of Allah and in the presence of angels to speak and explain the names and secrets of beings in His creation along with the insight to the knowledge of the realities or the latent properties or the hidden native .endowments in each of them

"... .' He said: ` O Adam, tell them their names "

And when he had told them their names, He said: `Did I not say unto you that I..." surely know the unseen things of heavens and the earth, and (that) I know what you " '? reveal and what you were hiding

Allah, having the knowledge of all the hidden things of the heavens and the earth, knew also what the angels did hide in their imaginations, which was that they deemed themselves more deserving of the high office of being the Deputy of Allah among His creation. This belief of the angels made them inquire into the Divine Will about Adam's .being the vicegerent

But when Adam (a.s.) spoke and the angels observed that surprising glory in him, they respected Adam for the vast knowledge and immense information and worthiness that radiated from him. Thus, it was made clear for them that it was only Adam (a.s.) .who was apt enough to be His Deputy on the Earth

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Verses ۳۴–۳۶; Arabic and English Translation

۳۴ وَ اِذْ قُلْنا لِلْمَلئِكَهِ اسْجُدُوا لِادَمَ فَسَجَدُوا اِلاّ اِبْليسَ اَبى وَاسْتَكْبَرَ وَكانَ مِنَ الْكافِرينَ

۳۵ وَ قُلْنـا يـا ادَمُ اسْـكُـنْ اَنْـتَ وَزَوْجُـكَ الْجَنَّـةَ وَكُلا مِنْهـا رَغَـداً حَيْـثُ شِـئْتُما وَلا تَقْرَبـا هـذِهِ الشَّجَـرَةَ فَتَكُونـا مِنَ الظّالِمِيـنَ

۳۶ فَـاَزَلَّهُمَـا الشَّيْطـانُ عَنْها فَاَخْرَجَهُما مِمّا كانا فيـهِ وَقُلْنَا اهْبِطُوا بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَـدُوٌّ وَلَكُـمْ فِى الْاَرْضِ مُسْـتَقَـرٌّ وَمَتاعٌ اِلى حينٍ

۳۴. " And when We said to the angels: ` Prostrate yourselves before Adam.' They all prostrated themselves except Iblīs; he refused and was full of pride, and so he became one of the infidels."

۳۵. " And We said: ` O' Adam, dwell you and your spouse in the Garden and eat of the plentiful therein (both of you) wherever you desire, but do not approach this tree, lest you become one of the unjust.' "

۳۶. " But Satan caused them to fall therefrom, and brought them out from the state (of felicity) in which they had been. And We said: ` Get down all of you, and be enemies one of another, and for you on the earth will be your dwelling place and your means of livelihood for a time.' "

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p:۱۴۹

Commentary : Verses ۳۴–۳۶

Adam in the Garden

In the former statements, the high rank and glory of Man was discussed. Now, in these verses, another aspect of the subject is dealt with. At first, to call upon our :minds, the Qur'ān says

:And when We said to the angels "

'.Prostrate yourselves before Adam `

;They all prostrated themsevles except Iblīs

"... ,he refused and was full of pride

Yes, he was proud and it was for this very pride that he became one of the :unbelievers

."and so he became one of the infidels..."

It should be noted that the above verse is the most valid piece of evidence and a vivid witness to the magnificence and nobility of Man whom, after his being created, all the angels were commissioned to make obeisance and pay homage to, and bow before that splendid creation. He was really appropriate for the position of being the divine deputy and His vicegerent on the earth. This one, who had such a high glorious rank, that was apt to bring up, from his seed, some refined and respectful children, some of .whom would be prophets, was worthy of such obeisance and honour

You may consider the position of an ordinary learned person who knows some definite formulas in a branch of science, and think of how immensely we respect him. Then, the position of Adam with all of his glory and vast knowledge about the world of .being, is obvious

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: Explanations

? Why did Iblis Disobey

We know that ` satan ' is a common noun that envelops both the first Satan and all other satans. But, ` Iblīs ' is a proper noun which refers to the same one that tempted Adam (a.s.). According to the

verses of the Qur'ān, Iblīs was not of the same nature as the angels, but he was from a different genus i.e. of the Jinn, of the nature of matter, who had been assembled among the angels. One of the verses wherein Iblīs is spoken of as a Jinn is as follows:

"And when said We unto the angels: `Prostrate ye unto Adam': then they (all) prostrated but Iblis; he was of Jinn,...", (Sura Kahf, No. ١٨, verse ٥٠).

His motive in this disobedience was pride and a special bigotry which had dominated his behaviour. He imagined that he was superior to Adam (a.s.) and he should not have been ordered to prostrate himself before him (a.s.). He thought Adam should prostrate before him. The explanation of this idea will be discussed later, in comments referring to Sura Al-A`rāf, No. ٧, verse ١٢.

The cause of his blasphemy was also that he considered the wise command of Allah rather inappropriate. He not only disobeyed practically, but also protested theoretically. Thus, his pride and self-conceit annulled a life-time of his worshipping and rendered it worthless! Beware, pride has many effects of ` this kind '!

The phrase: "...so he became one of the infidels" shows that before this command, too, he had changed his path from the path of angels and obeying the command of Allah, and had had ideas resulting from pride in mind. Perhaps, he had told himself that if the order of obeisance were given to him, he would certainly never obey it. The phrase: "...what you conceal", in verse ٣٣, may hint to this meaning. This idea is also referred to in a tradition from Imam Hassan `Askarī, the eleventh Imam (a.s.), cited in Tafsīr-ul-Qummī.(١)

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Was the Prostration for Allah or for Adam?

There is no doubt that /sajdah/ or a formulated prostration with the purpose of worshipping is deserved by none but Allah alone and the meaning of ` Unity of Worship ' means the same: that we worship and make obeisance to none else other than Allah, or it will be `shirk',

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Tafsir Almizan, vol.۱, p.۱۲۶ -۱

i.e. associating the object with Allah). Therefore, it is beyond doubt that the infallible) beings like the angels prostrated themselves for Allah, but it was for the creation of such a splendid being, Adam, that they obeyed Him by prostrating. Or, if they prostrated for Adam, their prostration was a kind of `obeisance' not an act of .worshipping

In the book ` `Uyūn-ul-Akhbār ' by Shaykh Ṣadūq, it is cited that Imam Ali-ibn-Mūsa-r-Ridā (a.s.) said: " The angels' prostration was for the adoration of worshipping Allah, on one side, and for the obeisance and respect of Adam (a.s.), on the other side, (because we (Ahlul-Bait) were in his seed."(١

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?Why was Adam and his Spouse Originally Placed in the Garden

Realization of Responsibilities

However, after that episode with Iblīs and the trial of the angels, Adam was ordered :that he and his spouse ought to abide in Paradise

And We said: ` O' Adam, dwell you and your spouse in the "

(Garden and eat of the plentiful therein (both of you

,wherever you desire, but do not approach this tree

".' lest you become one of the unjust

It is understood from the verses of the Holy Qur'ān that Adam (a.s.) was created to live on the earth, this very terrestrial globe, but, at the beginning He had temporarily placed him (and his wife) in a beautiful and prosperous Garden, bountiful with .blessings and free from any trouble and incommodity

This arrangement occurred, maybe, because Adam was not acquainted with the process of living on the earth. It was difficult for him to tolerate immediately all the troubles therein. Therefore, at first, he was to obtain some more information about

the kind of life to expect on the earth, and hence, it stood to reason that he should remain for a length of time in the Garden and learn the necessary skills there in order to find out that life on earth is accompanied with accepting some responsibilities and performing some duties whose accomplishments would bring his felicity, development and continuity of blessings, whereas, their refusal would cause him to .be involved with pain and hardship

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Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. ۱, p. ۵۸; Bibar-ul-Anwar, vol. ۱۱, p. ۱۳۹ -۱

Limits of Freedom

Also, he must know that although he has been created free, this freedom is limited. He cannot do whatever he wishes, but he must do without some of the things existing in this world for his own good. And again, he need know that it is not so that if he does a .wrong or an err all the doors of felicity and happiness will be closed to him

Understanding Repentance

He can return and repent and promise not to do anything against the order of Allah, and in such a case, when his repentance is accepted, he will return to the divine .blessings

Recognizing Friends and Enemies

Adam (a.s.) had to remain in that environment to gain some experience in order to be able to recognize his friend and his enemy, to learn how to live on the earth. Yes, there were a series of skills which were necessary for him to learn before stepping onto the earth. Those were the things that both Adam (a.s.) and his children needed for their future lives. Hence, the one who was created to be the vicegerent of Allah on the earth might stay in the Garden, perhaps, so that some instructions could be given .to him for his information and practical use

The following enlightening paragraph cited in Almizan upon the idea may also be mentioned here. " It should not be overlooked that even when Allah pardoned them (the couple) after their repentance, He did not return them to the Garden they were sent down to the earth to live therein. If their eating of the tree, the covering of their private parts and the life of this world were not a confirmed divine plan, and an irrevocable predetermined decree, they would have been returned to their place in the Garden as soon as they were forgiven for their mistake. In short, it was the divine plan that they should spend some time in the Garden to get them prepared for the life in this world; and their removal from the Garden, according to the causal relation decreed by Allah, was caused by their eating from the forbidden tree and becoming aware of their nakedness, and this happened because they listened to the whispering

(of Satan."(1)

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p:153

1- (English version) Almizan, vol. 1, p. 181)

Adam found himself in a position that it was best for him to follow the instruction of Allah about restraining from eating of the forbidden tree. The whisperer, Satan, had sworn to be busy whispering and making Adam (a.s.) and his children stray. As some other verses of the Qur'ān indicate, Satan assured Adam (a.s.) that if he and his wife ate from that tree they would become angels and would live in the Garden for ever. Satan even swore to them both that he was their sincere adviser: "...Most surely I am .(a sincere adviser to you", (Sura Al-A`rāf, No. ٧, verse ٢١

But Satan caused them to fall therefrom, and brought them out from the state (of " "... .felicity) in which they had been

Yes, they were removed from the Garden where they had been in ease and tranquility, far from any pain and trouble. This event took place as the direct result of .the effect of Satan's deceit

Then the Qur'ān says: "...And We said: ` Get down all of you, and be enemies one of another,...". In this enmity, Satan was on one side, and Adam (a.s.) and his wife were .on the other side

and for you on the earth will be your dwelling place and..."

".' your means of livelihood for a time

It was at this time that Adam (a.s.) realized that he had really done injustice to himself, because he was removed from the Garden for his submission to the whispers of Satan, and was to sojourn in a place

full of pain, toil, and trouble. True that Adam (a.s.) was a prophet and was immaculate, but, as we will discuss later, if a prophet commits an err, Allah will react severely towards him as if an ordinary person had committed it. It is the same for the ordinary .people when they commit sins

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The Heavy Forfeit Paid by Adam

Comments by the Late Allamah Tabatabaie

The Late Allamah Ṭabatabaie pointed out his point of view about this subject :concerning Adam (a.s.) and his spouse as follows

The injustice or wrong that they had done was against their own selves; it was " neither a sin (as this term is used in the Sharī`ah) nor an injustice against Allah. It shows that the prohibition was in the nature

of advice, pointing out to them what was good for their own comfort; it did not have the force of an ordained law. Adam and his wife did wrong to themselves, because their disregard for that divine advice caused their removal from the Garden.

When a man commits a sin (i.e. offence, from the Sharī`ah point of view), he is given a punishment. Then if he repents and his repentance is accepted, the punishment is completely removed, and he is returned to his previous position as though he had not committed the sin at all. If Adam (a.s.) and his wife were guilty of such a sin, they should have been returned to their place in the Garden soon after their repentance was accepted. But it was not done. It clearly shows that the prohibition did not have the force of an ordained law; it was only advice. Even so, neglecting it had its natural effect on both of them and they had to leave the Garden. But this removal from the Garden was not a punishment for any sin or crime; it was the natural consequence of the wrong they had done against their own selves.(١)

For a more detailed explanation about the subject, an expressive narration from Ḥadrat Ridā, the eighth Imam (a.s.), mentioned in `Uyūn-ul-'Akhbār, p. ١٠٨ and ١٠٩ which is also referred to in Bihār-ul-Anwār, vol. ١١, pp. ٧٨ and ١٠۴, can be studied, as well as another one on p. ١۵۶ from Imam Bāqir (a.s.). Muhammad Jawād Muqniyyah, in his well-known commentary: At Tafsīr-ul-Kāshif, vol. ١, pp. ٨۴-٨۶ has also cited some considerable details upon the matter. All of these references can surely be helpful in clarification of the meaning.

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١- Almizan, vol. ١, pp. ١٨۵-١٨۶(English version)

۳۷ فَتَلَقّی ادَمُ مِنْ رَبِّه کَلِماتٍ فَتابَ عَلَیْهِ اِنَّهُ هُوَ التَّوّابُ الرَّحیمُ

۳۸ قُلْنَا اهْبِطُوا مِنْها جَمیعًا فَاِمّا یَأْتِیَنَّکُمْ مِنّی هُدًی فَمَنْ تَبِـعَ هُدایَ فَلا خَوْفٌ عَلَیْهِمْ وَلاهُمْ یَحْزَنُونَ

۳۹ وَالَّذینَ کَفَرُوا وَکَذَّبُوا بِایاتِنا اُولئِکَ اَصْحابُ النّارِهُمْ فیها خالِدُونَ

۳۷. " Then Adam received (certain) words from his Lord. And He turned towards him (mercifully). Truly He is Oft-Pardoning, the Most Merciful."

۳۸. " We said: ` Get you down from it, all together; until there shall come to you a guidance from Me, for whoever follows My guidance, no fear shall be upon them, nor shall they grieve.'"

۳۹. " But those who reject Faith and deny Our Signs, they are the inhabitants of the Fire, dwelling therein forever."

Commentary : Verses ۳۷-۳۹

Adam's Return to Allah

After the temptation of Iblīs and the removal of Adam from the Garden, Adam realized that he had truly done injustice to himself when he was removed from that quiet environment full of bounties as a result of the temptation of Iblis and was placed on the earth, a grievous environment full of toil and pain. At this time, Adam thought of compensation for his mistake and earnestly attended to the Lord with his whole heart and soul, but with a great deal of regret and penitence.

At the same time, the Mercy of Allah was bestowed on him with `some effective words' by the means of which Adam repented and He accepted his repentance mercifully; as the Qur'ān says:

" Then Adam received (certain) words from his Lord. ..."

"... .(And He turned towards him (mercifully ..."

".It did happen because: "...Truly He is Oft-Pardoning, the Most Merciful

The term /taubah/ originally means: ` to return '. In the statements of the Qur'ān, it means: `to return from sin'. This meaning is applied when it refers to a sinful person. But, sometimes, the term is used when concerning Allah. In this case, it means ` to return to His Mercy '; that is, the mercy which a person was deprived of because of committing sin. When a sinful one returns to the path of obedience and worship, He returns that Mercy to him/her, too. That is why the Lord is attributed as ` Oft-.Returning ', too

/The True Meaning of Repentance/taubah

By the way, it should be noted that the Arabic word /taubah/, which is generally understood as `repentance', does not imply the mere utterance of any verbal prayers. It demands a real and active change in the behavior as well as the active attitude of the individual towards the purity of his/her life. It demands a moral conversion with a strong and definite determination on the part of the repenting individual, never again to return to the mistake or the wrong that had been committed .before

In other words, the term /taubah/ `repentance' is a word commonly used both for Allah and His servants. When it is used for the servants of Allah, it means that ` they have returned to their Lord ', because any sinner, in fact, has abandoned his Lord, and .when the servant repents, he/she returns to Him

When servants fail to obey their Lord, it seems that they cause Him, also, to turn away from them. When Allah is attributed with /taubah/, it means that He returns His Mercy .and Favour to them

It is true that Adam, indeed, did not do any unlawful thing against the Lord, but that very mistake was counted as ` a comparative wrong ' regarding him. Adam (a.s.) immediately felt his condition and returned to his Lord. He repented by the means of the `words' he received, and his repentance was accepted. But what the nature of

.' the ` words' was will be discussed separately under the title of ` Explanation

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Anyhow, Adam's repentance was accepted but not abstaining

from the use of the fruit of the prohibited tree which had a potential innate effect ultimately resulted in the form of his settlement on the earth. This consequence :remained unchanged for the couple, as the above verses say

We said: ` Get you down from it, all together; until there shall come to you a " guidance from Me, for whoever follows My guidance, no fear shall be upon them, nor " .' shall they grieve

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But those who reject Faith and deny Our Signs, they are the inhabitants of the Fire, " ".dwelling therein forever

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: Explanation

The ` Words ' Adam (a.s.) Learnt from the Lord

Commentators have cited different ideas commenting on the quality and the meaning .(.of the ` words' that Allah taught Adam (a.s

Mere common sense suggests that what was bestowed upon Adam by the All-Knowing, All-Merciful Lord could not have been anything of an ordinary prayer. It must have been something very special or extraordinary which the All-Merciful Himself bestowed upon him by means of which Adam (a.s.) or anyone could unfailingly .invoke the Mercy of the Lord after having displeased Him

It is popularly accepted that the `words' were the same words and meanings revealed in Sura Al-'A`rāf, No. ٧, verse ٢٣, thus: " They said: ` Our Lord! We have wronged our own souls: if Thou forgive us not and bestow not upon us Thy Mercy, we ".' shall certainly be lost

A group of commentators have said that the purpose of the `words' might have been :this invocation

O' Lord! There is no deity but You! Glory be to You,and Yours is the Praise! O' my " Lord! I have indeed wronged my soul! Do Thou then forgive me! For Thou art the Best of those who forgive". Or, "...And have mercy upon me: for Thou art the Best of those who show mercy! " Or "...And turn unto me (in Mercy); for Thou art verily the Oft-Returning, Most Merciful!".

This idea has been cited in a tradition narrated from Imam Bāqir (a.s.),

p:۱۵۸

(the fifth Imam. (۱)

Some phrases similar to the above ones have occurred in the Qur'ān. For example, Jonah (Yūnus) (a.s.), asking Allah to forgive him, says: "...Glory to Thee: I was indeed wrong! ", (Sura Al-'Anbiyā , No. ۲۱, verse ۸۷). And, about Moses (a.s.), the Qur'ān says: "He prayed: ` O' my Lord! I have indeed wronged my soul! Do Thou then forgive me! ' .(So (Allah) forgave him...", (Sura Al-Qaṣaṣ, No. ۲۸, verse ۱۶

Many Islamic traditions narrated from Ahlul-Bait (a.s.), such as Tafsīr-i-Durrul-Manthūr, denote that the objective meaning of the ` words ' taught to Adam (a.s.) by Allah was the holy names of the Holy Five; viz: the holy Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.), his cousin and son-in-law Hadrat Ali, his daughter Fatimah, and his sons (i.e. grandsons) Hassan and Husayn (a.s.). Adam (a.s.) relied on these `words' and asked .Him to forgive him. Then, Allah accepted it and forgave him

These three commentaries do not contradict one another since the entirity of the `words' might have been taught to Adam (a.s.) in order that, through their (the ` words ') reality, depth, and innate nature, he could obtained a pure perfect spiritual change in his heart and soul totally so that Allah would shower him with His Grace and .Guidance

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Majma-ul-Bayan, vol. ۱, p.۸۹ -۱

۴۰ یا بَنی اِسرائیلَ اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتِیَ الَّتی اَنْعَمْتُ عَلَیْكُمْ وَاَوْفُوا بِعَهْدی اُوفِ بِعَهْدِكُمْ وَ اِیّایَ فَارْهَبُونِ

O' Children of Israel, remember My blessing wherewith I blessed you, and fulfil " .۴۰
".My covenant and I shall fulfil your covenant, and have awe of none but Me

Commentary : Verse ۴۰

The Remembrance of the Favours of Allah

The Remembrance of the Favours of Allah In the previous verses we learnt about the commission of Adam's vicegerency on the earth, the respectful treatment of the angels towards him, Iblīs's reaction of pride, and the negligence of his covenant with Allah, and, consequently, his removal from the Garden and, thereafter, his penitence. Through these events, this fundamental principle was made clear that: in this world, there are two opposite forces, i.e. right and wrong, or just and unjust, which are always at odds with each other. He who, following the temptations of Satan, chooses the wrong path gets farther and farther away from felicity and salvation and involves .himself in toil and pain, the fruit of which is remorse and regret

But those who, heedless of the Satanic temptations and those of vicious fellows, choose the path of obedience of Allah will live a happy life, free from spiritual pain and .grief

There is a close similarity between the story of Adam (a.s.) and that of the Israelites when they were rescued from the clutches of Pharaoh before their vicegerency on the earth, and, after that, their negligence of their solemn promise to Allah which caused them to be involved in pain and misery. Their fate not only resembles that of Adam's, but it can also be considered as a subdivision of that general principle. Hence, in the above verse and several verses after that, Allah refers to some different aspects of the lives of the Children of Israel and their lamentable end to complete with .them the educative lesson which He started with the story of Adam's fate

,He addresses the Israelites and says: " O' Children of Israel

remember My blessing wherewith I blessed you, and fulfil My covenant and I shall ".fulfil your covenant, and have awe of none but Me

Those three instructions (the remembrance of the great blessings of Allah, being loyal .to His covenant, to be in awe of only Him) are, indeed, the basis of all Divine programs

The remembrance of the blessings of the Lord leads Man to the knowledge of Allah, and provokes a sense of gratitude in him. Then, believing that those bounties are not given unconditionally and He has taken a covenant for them, makes man aware of his duties and responsibilities. After this, not having awe of anybody or any power in the way of performing the Divine duties, causes Man to remove all the barriers and obstructions from his way and fulfil faithfully his responsibilities and promises, for, having awe of this and that, is one of the greatest obstacles on this way, especially in the case of the Israelites who were under the control of Pharaonic goverments and, .consequently, fear had become a part of their lives

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:Explanations

Jews in Medina

It is interesting that, according to what historians of the Qur'ān have cited, Sura Al-Baqarah is the first Sura that was revealed in Medina. This Sura talks mostly about Jews, because they were the most dominate group of the ` People of the Book ' there. Before the advent of the Prophet of Islam (p.b.u.h.), as their own religious books indicated, they were waiting for such an advent, and used to give its glad tidings to others. They were also in a very good economical condition at that time and, on the .whole, they had a deep influence on the social affairs of Medina

But, with the advent of Islam, many of them not only did not accept the invitation of Islam, but stood, hiddenly and openly, against it, because Islam hindered them from their unlawful interests and did not let them continue their evil social projects. Now, after the passing of more than fourteen centuries, this same hostility is still alive and active

.against Islam

It was at that time when the above verse and the verses after that were sent down which blamed them intensively and, by mentioning the sensitive aspects of their historical background, moved them so violently that those Jews, who had the least sense of justice and truth-seeking, awoke and accepted Islam. Besides that, this .admonishment was a comprehensive lesson for all the Muslim believers, too

In the discussions of the verses that will come later, we shall talk about some of the outstanding circumstances of these people such as their rescue from the grips of Pharaoh, the cleaving asunder of the sea and the drowning of Pharaoh and his horsemen, the appointing place of Moses (a.s.) on Mount Sinai (Toor), the calf (of gold) worshipped by the Israelites when Moses (a.s.) was not among them which caused them to receive the instruction of the bloody repentence and, thereafter, the special bounties of Allah were sent down for them, and some other events similar to these, .each of which contains a lesson or lessons to be learnt by all

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The Jews' Twelve Covenants with Allah

As it is understood from the verses of the Holy Qur'ān, the covenant mentioned in the above verse is the very covenant of worshipping Allah; to treat parents, kindred, orphans, and the needy with kindness; to have fair behaviour with people, to attend and be steadfast in ritual prayers; to pay alms; to avoid doing grievous wrongs, and to .avoid shedding blood

:The witness of this statement is Sura Al-Baqarah, No. ٢,verses ٨٣ and ٨۴

And (remember) when We made a covenant with the Children of "

Israel (instructing): ` You shall not worship any but Allah; and

,you shall do) good to (your) parents)

,and to the near of kin and to the orphans, and the needy

,and speak kind words to people, keep up the prayer

.' (and pay the poor-rates (zakāt

,Then you turned away, except a few of you

p:۱۶۲

".(and you backslide (even now

:And (remember) when We made a covenant with you "

You shall not shed your blood, nor expel one another from your `

".dwellings ', then you confirmed it while you bore witness

These two verses, in fact, refer to the ten different covenants that Allah had taken from the Jews. When we consider, and add, the two other covenants of Sura Al-Mā'idah, No. ٥, verse ١٢, which advises them to believe in the Divine prophets and help them respectfully, the fact is made clear that they had given numerous covenants to Allah for those great Divine blessings; and they had been promised by Allah to be settled in the Gardens of Heaven under whose trees and castles streams flow, if they :would have kept their promises, thus

Allah did aforetime take a Covenant from the Children of Israel,... and Allah said: `I " am with you: if ye (but) establish regular Prayers, practise regular Charity, believe in My apostles, honour and assist them,... And admit you to Gardens with rivers flowing "...,beneath

But, unfortunately, inspite of the long expectations of the Jews based upon the prophecies in their sacred scriptures, they, finally, observed none of those promises and they continued their most vehement and the most torturous opposition and persecution against Islam and Muslims not only at the advent of Islam but they have also been continuing it until the present time. The fruit of their evil actions was that they became vagrant, and this condition will always be seen in their lives till the time when they will be destroyed. If we see that, with the support of this or that, they flourish in their authorative existence for a short length of time, it cannot be counted a real reason for their final victory. We know it well that one day the true followers of Islam, free from any tribal or racial adherences, and only under the light of the Holy .Qur'ān, will rise and put an end to all these vanities

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!Allah will Fulfil His Covenant, too

The bounties of Allah have never been given unconditionally and every blessing is .accompanied by a responsibility or responsibilities

A tradition from Imam Ṣādiq (a.s.) says that the objective meaning

of the phrase: `I shall fulfil your covenant', mentioned in this verse, is that Allah will (fulfil His covenant in admitting them into Heaven.(۱

It is not surprising that, in this tradition, the belief in the mastership of Hadrat Ali (a.s.) is mentioned as a part of this covenant, because one of the items of the covenant of the Children of Israel was the acceptance of the prophecy of the Divine Apostles and the assisting of them. And it is evident that the acceptance of their vicegerents is also a part of the acceptance of that leadership and mastership, which should be established at any time appropriate with that age. At the time of Moses (a.s.), it was he who held that position; and at the time of Hadrat Muhammad (p.b.u.h.), he did, and .thereafter Hadrat Ali (a.s.) continued it

By the way, the phrase: "... and have awe of none but Me", referring to an awe of His punishment because of their disobedience of His command, is an emphasis on this subject that, in fulfilling their covenant with Allah, they should fear of no one and no .circumstance

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? Why are Jews Called the Children of Israel

Israel' was one of the titles of Jacob, Yūsuf's (Joseph) father. Both the well-known` commentators ` Ṭabarsī ' in his book: `Majma`ul-Bayān ' (vol. ۱, p. ۹۲), and Shaykh-ut-Ṭā'ifah the Late Ṭoosī in his commentary book entitled: ` at-Tibyān Fī Tafsīr-il-Qur'ān ' (vol. ۱, p. ۱۸۰) have expressed: "Israel is the same as Jacob, the son of Issac (Ishāq) the son of Abraham (a.s.)...". These two great commentators believe that the word /isrā'īl/ is a combination of the term `Isr', /`abd/, with the meaning of `servant' .'and ` 'il ' with the meaning of `Allah

.Then, the word means `the servant of Allah'; and it is a `Hebraic' word

Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. ۱, p. ۷۳ -۱

۴۱ وَ امِنُوا بِما اَنْزَلْتُ مُصَدِّقًا لِما مَعَكُمْ وَلا تَكُونُوا اَوَّلَ كافِرٍ بِهِ وَلا تَشْتَرُوا بِاياتى ثَمَنًا قَليلًا وَ اِيّاىَ فَاتَّقُونِ

۴۲ وَ لا تَلْبِسُوا الْحَقَّ بِالْب-اطِلِ وَتَكْتُمُوا الْحَقَّ وَ اَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

۴۳ وَاَقيمُوا الصَّلوهَ وَ اتُوا الزَّكوهَ وَارْكَعُوا مَعَ الرَّاكِعينَ

.۴۱ " And believe in what I have revealed (the Qur'ān), confirming that (Scripture) which is with you, and be not the first to reject Faith therein, and sell not My Signs for ".a miserable price; and be in awe of none but Me

.۴۲ " And confound not the truth with falsehood, nor conceal the truth while you know ".((it

.۴۳ " And keep up the prayer, and pay the poor-rates (zakāt), and bow down in prayer ".(with those who bow down (in congregation

Commentary : Verses ۴۱-۴۳

The Lord commands the Jews that they should believe in His revelation, the Qur'ān, and accept it because the acceptance of the Qur'ān is just the same as the :acceptance of the Turah

" And believe in what I have revealed (the Qur'ān) confirming that (Scripture) which is "...,with you

This statement indicates that the Turah, in which they believe, itself has pointed out the glad tidings of the advent of the promised Prophet, Hadrat Muhammad (p.b.u.h.), and the revelation of the Holy Qur'ān. Thus, the requisite belief in the content of the .Turah is belief in the Qur'ān

"...,and be not the first to reject Faith therein..."

The verse addresses the Jews and says that those people, who are of the " People of the Book " and among whom there are scholars and learned men who believe in God and have accepted the Divine prophets, should not be the first group to reject the Qur'ān and deny its

rightfulness. When their scholars do not accept the truth, many others also follow .them and reject it

"...;and sell not My Signs for a miserable price..."

Some authentic narrations denote that many of the scholars and Rabbis of the Jews used to sell the verses and some features of Hadrat Muhammad, the promised Prophet (p.b.u.h.), mentioned in the Scripture of old, the Turah, to some of the rich Jews at that time and perverted the verses of the Turah in exchange for taking money from them. Here, Allah scorns them and forbids them from doing this abominable action and directs them not to corrupt the Scripture for that little sum of money. The money they used to take was, of course, a large sum, but, in comparison with what they committed, it was very little. Allah's Signs are worth more than all their paltry considerations, and changing and perverting those Divine Signs is a very great sin so that gold and silver, howsoever much they may be, or even high social :positions, seem naught in comparison with it. So, He says

".and be in awe of none but Me ..."

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And confound not the truth with falsehood, nor conceal the truth while you know " ".((it

This verse provides another emphasis on the above meaning. The Jewish scholars are told, here, not to mix up the truth with falsehood by perverting the verses of the Turah and hiding its revelations about the Prophet of Islam (p.b.u.h.), when they are supposed to make them manifest, because they recognize them and, in connection to .this, know the difference between right and wrong very well

And keep up the prayer, and pay the poor-rates (zakāt), and bow down in prayer " ".(with those who bow down (in congregation

In Islam, next to the belief in Allah, His Messenger, and the Resurrection, prayer and alms (zakāt) are the two essential pillars of Faith without which the establishment and

.endurance of Faith is impossible

Prayer and poor-rates, as well as observing their proper times, are

p:۱۶۶

strictly and repeatedly emphasized in the concerning verses of the Holy Qur'ān and Islamic traditions and narrations. The excellence and importance of prayers are briefly pointed out in commenting on verse ٣, the current Sura on pages ٨٠-٨٣ in this volume.

Explanation:

Islam, the Means of discipline and training

Islam, as a religion, has revealed information with the perfection necessary to train mankind and to discipline the human race and to enable them to raise themselves from the depths of material degradation to the unlimited elevation of spiritual glory in order to qualify each individual as an adherent, as much as he or she personally desires, to rise towards the divinity in store for every sincere seeker of it. The curbing of the physical desires of a human being is sure to have the natural consequence of sublimating it by the resulting moral effect on the mind which can gradually put it well on the way to receiving the enlightenment of the higher meanings of life. A certain degree of piety and devotion is essential for a human being to be initiated into the realm of spiritual bliss. All the previous religions, particularly the creed of the Jews and the Christians, were limited to some extreme systems of optional ascetic hermitage of extremes which did not agree with the natural demands of the social life of the people. The imposition of such extremes, with the freedom to do it or not, could help only a few to follow the order, discarding completely their worthy life but the bulk of the people had sunk deep into hypocritical observances and practices.

Islam, as a practical and fully regulated religion, bases its foundation first on humbling the ego of man by making him conscious about his relation to his Creator and thus making him yield to the Lord, his God, in complete submission to Him by worshipping in a way suiting his humble position. By this, Islam brings man in the presence of his Lord.

The purpose of Prayer

The first cardinal doctrine or ordinance of Islam is `ṣalāt' or ` prayers ' which

develops in a human being the appropriate feeling in relation to God and puts the .individual in direct contact with the great qualities of the Absolute Divinity

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۴۴ اَتَأْمُرُونَ النّاسَ بِالْبِرِّ وَ تَنْسَوْنَ اَنْفُسَكُمْ وَ اَنْتُمْ تَتْلُونَ الْكِتابَ اَفَلا تَعْقِلُونَ

Do you enjoin righteousness upon people while you forget your own selves (to " .۴۴ " ?practice it)? And you read the Scripture? Have you then no sense

Commentary : Verse ۴۴

This verse is apparently addressing and scorning the scholars of the Jews who, before the Divine invitation of Hadrat Muhammad (p.b.u.h.), recommended people to embrace Islam. They enjoined them to pay charity and favour each other, but they did not do these good deeds themselves. They did not accept Islam in order to .continue their mastership, nor pay charity lest they might become poor

But, the verse, in fact, addresses and admonishes all those who habitually .recommend others to piety and neglect their own souls

Do you enjoin righteousness upon people while you forget your own selves (to " "... ?(practice it

It is not logical that a person enjoins his fellow men to help others and work righteousness but, he himself does not observe it. That is why, at the end of the verse, :it says

" ?And you read the Scripture? Have you then no sense ..."

It inquires, how you do not understand that you should enjoin righteousness on yourselves first and do accordingly to be as an example, then expect others to obey you and receive your recommendation, with their whole hearts. Experience has proved that words which are uttered only by the tongue, as simple statements, physically strike the ears and perish. But reasonable speech that arises from the soul .and reality, settles in souls firmly and affects hearts deeply

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۴۵ وَاسْتَعینُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلوهِ وَاِنَّها لَکَبیرَهٌ اِلاّ عَلَی الْخاشِعینَ

۴۶ اَلَّذینَ یَظُنُّونَ اَنَّهُمْ مُلاقُوا رَبِّهِمْ وَ اَنَّهُمْ اِلَیْهِ راجِعُونَ

۴۵. " And seek you help (from Allah) through patience and prayer; and most surely it is a hard thing, save upon the humble",

۴۶. " Those who bear in mind the certainty that they will meet their Lord and that verily unto Him shall they return".

Commentary : Verses ۴۵-۴۶

Point

To enable Man to overcome his latent low desires and to clean his mind from the love of position and rank, the Qur'ān says:

" And seek you help (from Allah) through patience and prayer; and most surely it is a hard thing, save upon the humble",

How to Overcome Difficulties

To overcome difficulties and solve problems demands two fundamental principles.

Patience and Prayer

The first principle is a strong inner will, and the second one is a firm outward refuge. These two principles are referred to in the above verse as ` patience ' and ` prayer '. Patience, here, has been rendered into ` fasting ' and ` perseverance ' during difficulties while prayer is a connection with Allah and a means of communication with this Helpful Refuge.

About the term /ṣabr/ ` patience ', one of the commentary books (۱) says that it is a natural phenomena well-known to every enlightened one that bodily mortification is to some extent necessary in disciplining the human ego accommodated in the physical framework, to lighten it by liberating it from the clutches of the desires and passions of the material world otherwise it would sink deeply into its own devious

personal

p:۱۶۹

The Holy Quran, with English Translation of the Arabic Text and Commentary, p. ۱ -۱

۹۸

interest. This is essential to elevate it unto the heights of the spiritual realms. A religion merely consisting of some mere formal rituals and the offering of chanting or the recitation of some verbal prayers or charms without the demand on the individual for the practical control of the animal-self in him can hardly be worth anything. The truth endowed or the spiritual strength one gets through overcoming his selfish passions, is by itself a very vast subject to be dealt with in the brief notes meant to explain the particular aspects of the wordings of the Divine verses here. However, an Islamic tradition says that Imam Ṣādiq (a.s.) was once asked about the meaning of the word /ṣabr/ `patience ', mentioned in this verse, when he said: " Patience means fasting." (۱)

Again, commenting on this verse, the leading commentators have cited that whenever any difficulty confronted the Prophet of Islam (p.b.u.h.), he used to resort to ` fasting ' and ` prayers ' to be helped with. (۲) Also, Hadrat Ali (a.s.) did the same. (۳)

It is also narrated from Imam Ṣādiq (a.s.) who has said: " It does not matter that when one of you is involved in a grief out of the griefs of the world, you would make ablution and enter a mosque. Then, you would recite a prayer and offer a petition therein to Allah, because I know He has commanded: ` And seek you help (from Allah) through patience and prayer'." (۴)

Yes, verily prayer connects Man to an everlasting Power, to Allah, for Whom all the hard problems and complicated difficulties are easy. This very feeling causes man to be calm, powerful, and steadfast against misadventures.

And with prayer, what else can ever be imaginably more effective or successful than any individual in his helplessness approaching the All-Merciful, Almighty through prayers for help?

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In the verse following the above one, the Holy Qur'ān introduces the humble ones, thus:

Al-Burhan Fi Tafsiril Qur'an, vol. ۱, p. ۱۴ and Tafsir-uş-Şafi, vol. ۱, p. ۱۱۱ ۱ -۱

Majma'-ul-Bayan, vol. ۱, p. ۹۹ ۲ -۲

Ibid, p. ۱۰۰ ۳ -۳

Usuli-Kafi, vol. ۳, p. ۴۸۰ ۴ -۴

Those who bear in mind the certainty that they will meet their Lord and that verily " ".unto Him shall they return

So, it is narrated from Amir-ul Mu'mineen Ali (a.s.) who has said that one of the characteristics of the humble ones who are the same as the believers, is knowledge (and certainty about their meeting with Allah which will take place in the Hereafter. (١

? ' What is ` Meeting with Allah

The idea of ` meeting with Allah ' has been mentioned repeatedly in the Qur'ān where it totally means ` Presence in the Hereafter '. It is obvious that the purpose of ` meeting with the Lord ' is not a physical meeting like the meeting of people with each other face to face. We also know that Allah is not a bodily substance to have colour or place, or to be seen with the eyes. Then, as some commentators have said, the purpose of the phrase may be the observation of the effects of His Power in the scene .of the Hereafter, such as: His bounties, rewards, and punishments

Or, it means an esoteric intuition in the heart or soul, because, sometimes, Man reaches a point that he sees the Lord in front of him by his heart's eye, and in that .case no doubt will continue for him

This state may come to being for some people in this world as a result of piety, worship, and purification of the carnal soul. The following explanation, cited in Nahjul :Balāqah, attests to the idea

One of the companions of Amir-ul Mu'mineen Ali (a.s.), Di`lib al-Yamānī, who was a learned man, once asked him (a.s.) whether Ali (a.s.) had seen Allah, his Lord, when he (a.s.) replied: " Do I worship the One Whom I have not seen? " Then the man asked him to explain it more and Ali (a.s.) added: " Eyes do not see Him face to face, but (hearts (souls) perceive Him through the (light of) realities of Faith. ..."(٢

However, in the Hereafter, all human beings will attain this esoteric intuition, since, therein, the effects of the Glory and Power of Allah will be so manifested that none .can deny them, and all will have a decisive Faith in everything

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۱- Atyabul-Bayan, vol. ۲, p. ۲۱

۲- Nahjul-Balaqah, sermon ۱۷۹

۴۷ یا بَنی اِسْرائیلَ اذْکُرُوا نِعْمَتِیَ الَّتی اَنْعَمْتُ عَلَیْکُمْ وَ اَنّی فَضَّلْتُکُمْ عَلَی الْعالَمینَ

۴۸ وَاتَّقُوا یَوْمًا لا تَجْزی نَفْسٌ عَنْ نَفْسٍ شَیْئًا وَلا یُقْبَلُ مِنْها شَفاعَةٌ وَلا یُؤْخَذُ مِنْها عَدْلٌ وَلاهُمْ یُنْصَرُونَ

۴۷. " O' Children of Israel, call to mind My favour which I bestowed on you, and that I made you excel the nations (of that time).".

۴۸. " And guard yourselves against a day when no one in the least shall avail another, nor shall intercession be accepted from any one, nor shall any ransom be taken from any one, nor shall they be helped (from outside).".

Commentary : Verses ۴۷-۴۸

The Vain Imaginations of the Jews

In these verses, again, the Lord addresses the Children of Israel and reminds them of His bounties bestowed on them, thus:

" O' Children of Israel, call to mind My favours which I bestowed on you, ... "

These bounties were numerous consisting of Faith, Divine Guidance and their rescue from the grips of pharaohs which led them to regaining their splendour and independence.

Then, among these bounties He has pointed out the bounty of their being made to excel the nations of their time which in itself is a combination of different bounties. He continues and says: " ... and that I made you excel the nations (of that time).".

Some may think that the objective meaning of the phrase, " I made you excel the nations ", is that He has made them excel the nations all over the world and for ever.

But, regarding other verses, the Qur'ān makes it clear that the application of the address ` you ' is meant for those immediately present

at that time and in their own locality, because in another occurrence the Qur'ān, addressing Muslims, says: " You are the best of peoples, evolved for mankind, ..." .((Sura 'Āli-` Imrān, No. ٣, verse ١١٠

Another verse about the Israelites says: " And We made a people, considered weak (and of no account), inheritors of lands in both East and West ...", (Sura Al-'A` rāf, No. ٧, verse ١٣٧). It is obvious that the Children of Israel did not inherit the world entirely at that time. So, it means that they inherited the east and the west of their own region. Therefore, their preference to other nations means preference to the other nations in .their environment at that time

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The Qur'ān rejects the vain considerations of the Jews. They thought that, on the Day of Judgement, their forefathers and ancestors, who were prophets of Allah, would make intercession for them; or they imagined that on that Day those prophets could give ransom for their sins the same as some of their people employ bribery in this .world

:The Qur'ān says

And guard yourselves against a day when no one in the least shall "

"... avail another

"...nor shall intercession be accepted from any one ..."

"... ,nor shall any ransom be taken from any one ..."

".(nor shall they be helped (from outside ..."

In brief, the ` Judge ' on that Day is He Who accepts, from the servants, only pure good actions done with true belief, as the Qur'ān says about it: " The Day whenon neither wealth nor sons will avail," " But only he (will prosper) that brings to Allah a .(sound heart ", (Sura Shu`arā, No. ٢۶, verses ٨٨ and ٨٩

The verse under discussion, in fact, is a hint to this reality that, in this world, saving a sinful person from punishment by applying all possible means is an ordinary custom. Sometimes someone undertakes the payment of another person's compensation and pays it. If this way fails, intercession may be resorted to and some respectable personalities who have power and influence may be brought forward to intercede for him. If intercession does not avail either, the person tries to save

himself by paying for the fine. And, if this, too, provides no results, he asks his friends and fellow men to help him somehow, so that he can escape from the grips of .punishment

There are different ways of fleeing from punishment in this world, but the Qur'ān says that the chastisements in the Hereafter are completely different from those in this world and none of these behaviours are acceptable there. The only way of rescue is to refuge under the shade of Faith and righteousness, and to ask help from Allah, the .Merciful

:Supplication

O' Lord, the Creator, the Cherisher! We humbly ask You to guide us so that, at the end, ".You will be pleased with us and we can be prosperous

Intercession in the Qur'ān and Traditions

The term /ŝafā`at/ ` intercession ', with all its derivations, has occurred about thirty .times in the Qur'ān. This status shows the depth of the importance of the matter

Undoubtedly, the punishments of the Lord, whether in this world or in the next, are not for revenging at all, but they are, in fact, to warrant the obedience of the Divine ordinances and, consequently, the development and progress of men. Therefore, everything that weakens this security should be avoided in order that people would .be less likely to commit sin and vice

On the other hand, the way of repentance and return to righteousness and improvement should not be completely closed to the sinners. They must have the opportunity and possibility of improving themselves which results in piety and .returning to the path of Allah

Thus, intercession means that, on the Day of Judgement, prophets, saints, and some special righteous ones will intercede with Allah's permission for those who have not cut their tie of Faith with Allah and preserved their spiritual relationship with Him and .His Messengers

In other words, intercession, in its proper meaning, exists for the preserving of this equilibrium. It is a means for the sinners and the wrong-doers to return from their .present way to the path of obedience and servitude

We may emphasize that the doctrine of intercession is quite natural, reasonable and logical. It is a natural, just, and merciful classification of souls according to the natural affinity and the bonds of love and sincere attachment which existed between the individual and the faithful servants of Allah, viz. the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) and the holy Ahlul-Bait (a.s.) whose purity of spirit, flawlessness of conduct and character, selfless services and matchless sacrifices for the cause of truth, are universal factors and whose goodliness is unreservedly acknowledged by the Muslims and even by the .non-Muslims as well

However, as it was mentioned before, there are numerous verses in the Qur'ān concerning ` intercession '. To understand these verses completely and correctly, all of them should be studied carefully and considered as a whole to follow the unity of .purpose they are meant for

It is absolutely wrong that for proving our claim we take only one verse from amongst the numerous verses on intercession and neglect the others. The errs that have come into being upon the subject of intercession, as well as upon some other rational subjects, are the effect of such wrong and imperfect investigations. This method, in which we take a single verse and refuse or neglect other verses that can be elucidative and frames of reference for that particular verse, is far from the right .manner of researching

Then, firstly, besides all the other arguments of the various expositions on the validity of intercession based upon the other verses of the Qur'ān, as was mentioned formerly, and with further assurance by the traditions of the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.), it is a natural and logical conclusion, beyond all doubt, that on the Day of Judgement intercession cannot be but an undeniable fact. That is, Allah's regard for His holy and .faithful servants is accepted as a natural and logical necessary factor

Secondly, it is certain that the Holy Qur'ān in many places, some of which are

mentioned below, asserts the effectiveness of intercession under some conditions, on the Day of Judgement, when those

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:authorized by the Lord shall have the right to do it. The Qur'ān says

On that Day shall no intercession avail except for those for whom permission has " been granted by (Allah) Most Gracious and whose word is acceptable to Him ", (Sura .(Ṭāhā, No. ٢٠, verse ١٠٩

No intercession can avail in His Presence, except for those for whom He has granted " .(permission...", (Sura Sabā, No. ٣۴, verse ٢٣

And those whom they invoke besides Allah have no power of intercession; only he " who bears witness to the Truth, and they know (him)", (Sura Az-Zukhruf, No. ۴٣, verse .(٨۶

For further elucidation on the doctrine of intercession some of the verses which can .also be referred to are: ٢۶: ١٠٠, ٢: ١٢٣ and ٢۵۵, ٧۴: ۴٨, ٢١: ٢٨, and ١٩: ٨٧

In the authentic literature of Muslims,both the Sunnite and Shī`ah schools, through some Islamic narrations, there are many implications to the existence of ` intercession ' in the Hearafter which are presented as explanatory statements for the .aforementioned verses on intercession

Some of these books are: Bihār-ul-Anwār, Majma`-ul-Bayān, Tafsīr-i-Almīzān, At-Tibyān fī Tafsīr-il-Qur'ān, Al-Burhān fī Tafsīr-il-Qur'ān, Al-Khiṣāl by Shaykh Ṣadūq, Usūl-i-Kāfī, Sunan-i-Ibn-Mājih, Musnad-i-Aḥmad, Muwatta'-i-Mālik, Sunan-i-Tarmazī, Sunan-i-Dārmī, Ṣaḥīḥ-i-Muslim, Ṣaḥiḥ-i-Bukhārī, ...

Out of the many traditions and narrations cited in the above mentioned books, a few :of them have been chosen here

.١ The holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) has said: " I will be the first one who intercedes and the first one whose intercession will be accepted (by Allah)." (١)

.٢ Hadrat Ali (a.s.) said: "...We will intercede and those who love (and follow) us will do so, too. ..."(٢)

.٣ The holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) also said: "...I have been bestowed on (five privileges: the

first is) ` intercession ' which I have kept for my followers(Ummah). Intercession is (permitted) for the one who associates no partner with Allah ..."(۳)

۴. Again, the Messenger of Allah (p.b.u.h.) has said: "...The most

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۱- ۱ Sunan-i-Tarmazi, vol. ۵, p. ۲۴ and Sunan-i-Darmi, vol. ۱, p. ۲۶ and ۲۷

۲- ۲ Al-Khişal by Şaduq, p. ۶۲۴

۳- ۳ Musnad-i-Ahmad, vol. ۱, p. ۳۰۱ and Sunan-i-Nisa'i, vol. ۱, p. ۱۷۲

prosperous people by my intercession on the Day of Judgement will be those who have sincerely said from their deep hearts (souls): there is no god except Allah (i.e. (sincerely believe in Allah)."(1)

5. The holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) has also said: " My intercession is for all (true) Muslims."(2)

6. Firdous-ud-Diylamī, Abūhurayrah, narrates from the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) who has said: " The intercessors (in the Hereafter) are five: the Qur'ān, relationships, trust, your Messenger, and the people of the house (Ahlul-Bait) of your prophet."(3)

7. Imam Ṣādiq (a.s.) is narrated to have said: " There is none of (the people of) ancient times and (those of) the later times but needs Muhammad's intercession (p.b.u.h.) on the Day of Judgement. "(4)

8. In Usūl-i-Kāfī, it is also cited that Imam Ṣādiq (a.s.) has said in a tradition: " He who wishes to enjoy of intercession by the intercessors with Allah, should try to gain His pleasure." (5)

We hope that Allah, the Merciful, may bestow the success of obedience and servitude on His path upon all of us and may He save us from any err and sin in our deeds. May He deprive us not of the intercession of the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) and Ahlul-Bait (a.s.) on the Day of Reckoning. Amin, O' Lord of the Worlds!

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1- Ṣahih-i-Bukhāri, vol. 1, p. 36

2- Sunan-i-Ibn-Majih, vol. 2, p. 1444, tradition 4317

3- Bihar-ul-Anwar, vol. 8, p. 43

4- Bihar-ul-Anwār, vol. 8, p. 38, tradition 16

5- Usul-i-Kafi, vol. 8, p. 11 and Bihār-ul-Anwar, vol. 8, p. 53

۴۹ وَاِذْ نَجَّيْنـاكُمْ مِنْ الِ فِرْعَوْنَ يَسُومُونَكُمْ سُوءَ الْعَـذابِ يُـذَبِّحُـونَ اَبْناءَكُمْ وَ يَسْـتَحْيُـونَ نِساءَكُـم وَ فى ذلِكُمْ بَلاءٌ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ عَظيمٌ

And (remember) when We delivered you from the people of Pharaoh who had " .۴۹ afflicted you with evil torment, slaughtering your sons and sparing your women-folk, ".and in that was a great trial from your Lord

Commentary : Verse ۴۹

The Greatest Bounty Bestowed on the Children of Isreal

In this verse, the Qur'ān points to another great bounty out of the bounties He bestowed on the Children of Israel. This favour is the bounty of deliverance from the grips of those transgressors. This is the greatest bounty amongst the bounties of :Allah on them and He reminds them, saying

"...And (remember) when We delivered you from the people of Pharaoh "

"... ,who had afflicted you with evil torment... "

"... ,slaughtering your sons and sparing your women-folk... "

.They let your women-folk live as maid-servants and serve hard for them

".and in that was a great trial from your Lord..."

To illustrate the torments of Pharaoh upon the Israelites, the Qur'ān has particularly applied the term /yasūmūna/ in the future tense of the verb, which, in Arabic, indicates the duration and continuity of that evil torment. Thus, they saw for themselves that their innocent sons were slaughtered before their eyes and their daughters were taken away from them to serve in the Egyptians' houses as maid-servants. That conduct caused them to tolerate and experience torture permanently, too. They were considered as servants, workers, and slaves of the Coptic people in Egypt and of the .men of Pharaoh

It is a matter of importance that the Qur'ān counts this event as a great and grievous

trial for the Children of Israel and, of course, bearing all those bitter harsh afflictions .had been a hard tremendous trial

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It is also probable that the term /balā'/ ` trial ', here, has been used with the meaning of ` punishment '. The reason is that before that event, Israelites had been enjoying an abundancy of bounties with great power and authority. But they became ungrateful and the Lord punished them.

Anyhow, the day when the Children of Israel were delivered from the tyrannical clutches of the Egyptian monarch, the Pharaoh, was a very important historical day in their lives on which the Holy Qur'ān has emphasized repeatedly.

Slavery of Females, Past and Present

In the history of the Israelites, their bondage in Egypt was indeed a tremendous trial for them. Even the Egyptians' wish to spare the lives of the Israelites' females when the males were slaughtered, as the Qur'ān declares, added to their bitterness. So, their rescue from that cruelty was really counted as a bounty.

It seems that the Qur'ān intends to warn all human beings that they should try to obtain their rightful freedom however hard it may be, and protect it.

Hadrat Ali (a.s.) has pointed out this matter in one of his sermons: "...Real death is in the life of subjugation while real life is in dying in the way of freedom..."(١)

But the modern world is different from that of the ancient in this manner. At that time, for example, Pharaoh, through his peculiar cruelty, slaughtered the men and the sons of the people who were his enemies and let their females remain alive to serve Egyptians. While, today, in this modern world, the spirit of manhood among males is often slaughtered under some other circumstances, and their females are mostly made slaves for the lustful pleasure of a group of filthy men. Sometimes, the Pharaohs of the Age have pity upon neither men nor women; neither sons nor daughters; neither adults nor infants. They have verified this statement in the massacres they have committed in some Islamic and non-Islamic countries by using chemical bombs and

Nahjul-Balaqah, sermon ۵۱ -۱

the likes of them. Their actions are often even worst than what the Pharaohs of Egypt .used to do

Now, why did Pharaoh decide to kill the Israeli boys and let their women-folk live ? Some of the commentators believe that the reason for that murderous decision was the dream that Pharaoh dreamed. A more appropriate answer to this question will be discussed when commenting on Sura Al-Qaṣaṣ No. ۲۸, verse ۴. Therein, you will come to know that the reason for that murder was not only Pharaoh's dream, but he and his clique also stood in awe of the increasing number of the Children of Israel and that they might become powerful and destroy the government of Pharaoh. This factor .helped them make that hostile decision

Some details about the miserable lot of the Israelites under the bondage of Pharaoh and how they were rescued, are also explained in Exodus the opening chapter of the .Bible i.e. Chapter ۱

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۵۰ وَ اِذْ فَرَقْنا بِكَمُ الْبَحْرَ فَاَنْجَيْناكُمْ وَ اَغْرَقْنا الَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَاَنْتُمْ تَنْظُرُونَ

.۵۰ "And (remember) when We divided the sea for you, and delivered you and drowned Pharaoh's people while you were looking on."

Commentary : Verse ۵۰

The Rescue from Pharaoh !

Point

In the previous verse the miraculous rescue of the Israelites from the tyrannical grips of the Egyptian monarch, the Pharaoh, was briefly pointed out. The present verse is, in fact, an explanatory statement of that rescue, which itself is a sign of the great bounties of Allah upon the Children of Israel. It says:

"And (remember) when We divided the sea for you, ..."

"...and delivered you and drowned Pharaoh's people while

you were looking on."

The incident of the drowning of Pharaoh and his horsemen in the sea, and the rescue of the children of Israel from their cruel clutches is expressed in several Suras of the Qur'ān, including: Sura Al-'A`rāf, No. ۷, verse ۱۳۶ - Sura Al-'Anfāl, No. ۸, verse ۵۴ - Sura Al-'Asrā', No. ۱۷, verse ۱۰۳- Sura Ash-Shu`arā', No. ۲۶, verses ۶۳ and ۶۶ - Sura Az-Zukhruf, No. ۴۳, verse ۵۵- and Sura Ad-Dukhān, No. ۴۴, verses from ۱۷ on.

More or less all the details of that happening are stated in the above Suras, but by the verse under discussion the story is hinted at only from the point of the favour and grace of Allah upon the Children of Israel in order to attract them to the invitation of Islam, the new religion of salvation, and to invoke them to accept it.

As you will read the explanation of this subject in detail through the aforementioned Suras, Moses (a.s.), after a long time of preaching and inviting Pharaoh and his people to the Divine Faith and showing them numerous miracles and receiving no positive

response from them, was commissioned that he and the Children of Israel move from Egypt

p:۱۸۱

was commissioned that he and the Children of Israel move from Egypt at midnight. But when he reached the seashore, he realized that Pharaoh and his horsemen were closely pursuing them. The Israelites were terribly afraid.

They had the frightful sea in front of them and at their heels the forceful army of the Pharaoh, whom they could not challenge, threatened them. At that time Moses (a.s.) was commanded to strike the water of the sea with his Rod and he obeyed. Then several dry paths appeared in the sea on which Moses (a.s.) and his people passed. When they crossed the sea from between the walls of water and arrived on the other side of the sea safely, Pharaoh and his army, who were following them, entered the same paths. They reached the midst of the sea when the walls of water came together and all of them drowned. Their corpses were floating over the sea water as the Children of Israel were watching them and witnessing how helpless their enemies were in front of their eyes.

That terrible anxiety and the horrible fear they had compared with this miraculous rescue both deserved to be contemplated, and demanded that they express thanksgiving to Allah.

In this manner, the Qur'ān tells the Jews that Allah has granted them His Mercy so that they could rid themselves of that anxiety and awe; then why do they repudiate the Prophet of Islam, Allah's Messenger, and do not accept Islam?

By the way, this verse teaches the human race to rely on Allah and trust in that everlasting Power in their lives. They ought to try hard and not stop in their endeavours and seek His help, because He helps them even in their most grievous moments.

Detailed Account from the Bible

A detailed story of this miraculous event is given in the Bible, Exodus; Chapter ۱۴.

۱. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,

۲. Speak unto the children of Israel, that they turn and encamp before Pi-hahiroth,

between Migdol and the sea, over against Baal-zephon: before it shall ye encamp by .the sea

For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, They are entangled in the land, the .۳
.wilderness hath shut them in

And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, that he shall follow after them; and will be .۴
honoured upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host; that

.the Egyptians may know that I am the LORD. And they did so

And it was told the king of Egypt that the people fled: and the heart of Pharaoh and .۵
of his servants was turned against the people, and they said, Why have we done this
? that we have let Israel go from serving us

.And he made ready his chariot, and took his people with him .۶

And he took six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt and captains .۷
.over every one of them

And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh, King of Egypt, and he pursued after .۸
.the children of Israel and the children of Israel went out with an high hand

But the Egyptians pursued after them, all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, and .۹
his horsemen, and his army, and overtook them encamping by the sea, beside Pi-
.hahiroth, before Baal-zephon

And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, .۱۰
behold, the Egyptians marched after them; and they were sore afraid: and the
.children of Israel cried out unto the LORD

And they said unto Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken .۱۱
us away to die in the wilderness wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us
? forth out of Egypt

Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may .۱۲
serve the Egyptians ? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that
.we should die in the wilderness

And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of .۱۳
the LORD, which he will show to you today: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen
.today, ye shall see them again no more for ever

.The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace .۱۴

۱۵. And the LORD said unto Moses: Wherefore criest thou unto me? Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward.

۱۶. But lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea.

۱۷. And I, behold, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they

p:۱۸۳

shall follow them: and I will get honour upon Pharaoh, upon all his host, upon his
.chariots and upon his horsemen

And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I have gotten honour upon .۱۸
.Pharaoh, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen

And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went .۱۹
behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind
:them

And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was .۲۰
a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came
.not near the other all the night

And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to .۲۱
go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the
.waters were divided

And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and .۲۲
.the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left

And the Egyptians pursued and went in after them to the midst of the sea, even all .۲۳
.Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen

And it came to pass that in the morning watch the LORD looked unto the host of .۲۴
the Egyptians through the pillar of the fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of
.the Egyptians

And took off their chariot wheels, that they drave them heavily: so that the .۲۵
Egyptians said, let us flee from the face of Israel: for the LORD fighteth for them
.against the Egyptians

And the Lord said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the sea, that the waters .۲۶
.may come again upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots and upon their horsemen

And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea and the sea returned to his .۲۷

strength when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled against it; and the LORD over-threw the Egyptians in the midst of the sea.

۲۸. And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them; there remained not so much as one of them.

p:۱۸۴

But the children of Israel walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea; and the .۲۹
.waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left

Thus the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel .۳۰
.saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore

And Israel saw that great work which the LORD did upon the Egyptians: and the .۳۱
.people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD, and his servant Moses

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The above text is exactly narrated from the Bible, published in London by the British and Foreign Bible Society, ۱۴۶ Queen Victoria Street. Then, if some signs and punctuations are not the same as those used in the present style of English writing, it should not be taken as being wrong or misused, but it is because of the method of writing in the original English translated Bible that we observed carefully, without .making any changes in the text. The case is also true for page ۱۹۰ in this book

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۵۱ وَ اِذْ واعَدْنا مُوسى اَرْبَعينَ لَيْلَةً ثُمَّ اتَّخَذْتُمُ الْعِجْلَ مِنْ بَعْدِه وَاَنْتُمْ ظالِمُونَ

۵۲ ثُمَّ عَفَوْنا عَنْكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ ذلِكَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

۵۳ وَاِذْ اتَيْن–ا مُوسَ–ى الْكِت–ابَ وَالْفُ–رْق–انَ لَعَلَّكُ–مْ تَهْتَ–دُونَ

۵۴ وِ اِذْ قالَ مُوسى لِقَوْمِه يا قَوْمِ اِنَّكُمْ ظَلَمْتُمْ اَنْفُسَكُمْ بِاتِّخاذِكُمُ الْعِجْلَ فَتُ–وبُ–وا اِل–ى بارِئِكُ–مْ فَاقْتُلُ–وا اَنْفُسَكُمْ ذلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ
لَكُ–مْ عِنْدَ بارِئِكُمْ فَتابَ عَلَيْكُمْ اِنَّهُ هُوَ التَّوّابُ الرَّحيمُ

۵۱. " And (remember) when We appointed forty nights for Moses, and you then took the Calf (for worship) after him, and you were unjust (to yourselves)."

۵۲. " Then We pardoned you after that in order that you might be thankful."

۵۳. " And (remember) when We gave Moses the Book as a Criterion(between right and wrong) so that you might be guided (aright)."

۵۴. " And (remember) when Moses said to his people: ` O' my people, you have indeed wronged yourselves by worshipping the Calf; so turn (in repentance) to your Creator and slay yourselves (the wrong doers), that will be better for you with your Creator'. Then, He turned towards you (mercifully). Truly, He is the Oft-Pardoning, the Most Merciful."

Commentary : Verses ۵۱-۵۴

The Israelites' Greatest Deviation

In these four verses, the Qur'ān refers to another episode in the adventurous history of the Children of Israel and reminds the Jews of some shaking events of theirs.

These verses speak of their greatest deviation throughout the

history of their lives which was their aberration from the path of monotheism to the worshipping of the calf. The Qur'ān warns them that they had gone astray once in their history because of the temptations of the mischief makers. Now they should beware not to repeat that mistake. They should be attentive that the way of pure .monotheism, viz. the way of Islam and the Qur'ān, is open to them

:They must not detach from it. First the verse says

"... ,And (remember) when We appointed forty nights for Moses "

When he (Moses) departed from you and his thirty night appointment delayed for forty nights, "...and you then took the Calf (for worship) after him, and you were unjust ".to yourselves

This event will be scrutinized when commenting on Sura Al-'A`rāf, No. ۷, verse ۱۴۲ and .Sura Tāhā, No. ۲۰, verses ۸۶ on

:The story in brief is as follows

After the deliverance of the Children of Israel from the tyrannical grips of Pharaoh and his men, who drowned in the sea, Moses (a.s.) was commanded to leave for Mount Sinai to stay there for thirty days and nights in order to receive the Law or the Turah on the Tablets from the Lord. Subsequently, the term was extended by ten more days and nights for the trial of the people. The delay in the return of Moses (a.s.) to his people at the end of thirty days, owing to the extension of the time by ten days and nights, was sufficient to create in the minds of the Israelites doubt about the authenticity of Moses (a.s.) as a true Prophet, on one hand, and for fallacious seducive Sameri to make a golden Calf possessing a special sound in order to deceive the .Israelites, on the other hand. They, thereby, were deluded into calf-worship

The majority of the Children of Israel joined him. Aaron (a.s.), the deputy and brother of Moses (a.s.) with a minority of people remained faithful to their monotheistic creed. They tried very much to restrain others from that great deviation, but they failed .finally

When Moses (a.s.) returned from the Mount and observed the circumstances, he became angry about it and scorned them severely. They understood that they had done wrong and decided to repent. Moses (a.s.) on Allah's command suggested to them an important repentance, whose explanation will be presented in future verses.

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: In the next verse it says

".Then We pardoned you after that in order that you might be thankful "

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Then, it continues mentioning the series of happenings that had occurred before, :saying

And (remember) when We gave Moses the Book as a Criterion (between right and " ".(wrong) so that you might be guided (aright

And (remember) when Moses said to his people: ` O' my people, you have indeed " "... ;wronged yourselves by worshipping the Calf

so turn (in repentance) to your Creator..." your repentance should be fulfilled in this..." definite form: "...and slay yourselves (the wrong doers), ...", in which the righteous had to kill the wrong doers. Of course, those who had not worshipped the calf were not condemned to death, but they were commissioned to slay those calf-worshippers among themselves, be they their own kith and kin, i.e. their own fellow menwhom they loved the most because they had associated a partner, the Calf, to the Lord, the "... .One True God.(١) "...that will be better for you with your Creator

Then, He turned toward you (mercifully). Truly, He is the..."

".Oft-Pardoning, the Most Merciful

'Their Punishment `you have indeed wronged yourselves

The phrase /innakum ẓalamtum anfusakum/ `you have indeed wronged yourselves', here, is also noteworthy because: in Islam, sin which a man or a woman commits, is done against the individual's own self. For, the first and the immediate effect of a sin committed is that the individual becomes degenerated and thus gets far away from .Divine Mercy

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Atyabul-Bayan, vol. ۲, p. ۳۴۱ -۱

۵۵ وَ اِذْ قُلْتُمْ یا مُوسی لَنْ نُؤْمِنَ لَکَ حَتّی نَرَی اللّهَ جَهْرَةً فَاَخَذَتْکُمُ الصّاعِقَهُ وَ اَنْتُمْ تَنْظُرُونَ

۵۶ ثُمَّ بَعَثْناکُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَوْتِکُمْ لَعَلَّکُمْ تَشْکُرُونَ

۵۵. "And (remember) when you said: ` O' Moses! we will never believe in you until we see Allah manifestly', so the thunderbolt struck you while you looked on."

۵۶. "Then We raised you up after your death in order that haply you might be thankful."

Commentary : Verses ۵۵–۵۶

An Unjust Demand!

Point

These two verses remind the Children of Israel about another bounty amongst the great bounties that Allah bestowed upon them.

This illustrates how stubborn and obstinate those people were, and how the divine grievous torment encompassed them as a result of their unjust demand. But, thereafter, the Mercy of Allah blessed them again. It says:

"And (remember) when you said: ` O' Moses! we will never believe in you until we see Allah manifestly', ..."

Result of their Demand

This kind of demand might originate from their ` ignorance ', because the minds of ignorant ones usually cannot understand beyond the impressions of their senses. Their minds are not able to conceive anything invisible. So, they demanded to see the Lord openly with their own eyes.

Or, it originated haply from their stubbornness and their habit of seeking pretext which was one of the characteristics of those people.

At any rate, they frankly told Moses (a.s.) that they would never believe in him until

.they saw the Lord manifestly and with their very eyes

Here, they insisted on seeing Him. This placed Moses (a.s.) in a

helpless predicament. So, they saw, instead, one of the creatures of Allah that they did not have the ability to look upon. This incident might have made them understand that the eyes of the head were not able to see even many of the creations of Allah, much less their ability to see His Pure Self, the Almighty. Then, a thunderbolt came down and struck the mountain. It issued an amazing light with a horrible sound and an awful earthquake so that everybody there, because of their intensive fear, fell down dead. So, the Qur'ān, following the above sentence says: "...so the thunderbolt struck ".you while you looked on

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Resurrection from the Dead

Moses (a.s.) was very worried about that event. Seventy persons from amongst the great leaders of the Israelites had died in that occurrence. It was a very crucial event for the Children of Israel to endure and they would make life hard for Moses (a.s.). Then he (a.s.) asked Allah to raise them up and let them live again. His supplication :was accepted, as the Qur'ān says

".Then We raised you up after your death in order that haply you might be thankful "

This short explanation of the above two verses is also expounded more comprehensively in Sura Al-'A`rāf, No. ۷, verse ۱۵۵ and Sura Nisā, No. ۴, verse ۱۵۳. Concerning seeing God, we have in Exod. ۳۳: ۲۰: " And He said: ` Thou canst see My ".' face: for there shall no man see Me and live

Biblical Account

:See the Bible, Exodus ۱۹: ۱۶ and ۱۷, too, which is as follows

And it came to pass on the third day in the morning that there were thunders and .۱۶ lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding .loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled

And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they .۱۷

.stood at the nether part of the mount

This story shows that while inviting the ignorant and stubborn people to the right path, the great prophets of Allah were involved in many complicated problems. Sometimes, the people asked for improvisatorial miracles from the prophets; and sometimes they went further and demanded of them to see the Lord openly with their

physical eyes. They said decisively that they would never believe in them unless their demand was actually performed. They insisted on their vain thoughts and put forth some new excuses even when they were faced with respective violent responses from the Lord. But, the Grace and Mercy of Allah assisted the prophets on their path, else it was impossible for them to resist and stand firm when receiving all those .excuses

This tendency of demanding extraordinary and silly manifestations as miracles had also been the habit of the opponents of the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.), (the Holy Qur'ān ۴: .(۱۵۳, and ۱۷: ۹۰-۹۶

By the way, this verse is one of the verses that attests to the existence of the possibility of ` restoration of life ', in this world, because its occurrence in one respect .is evidence of its possibility in other respects, too

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۵۷ وَظَلَّلْنا عَلَيْكُمُ الْغَمامَ وَأَنْزَلْنا عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَنَّ وَالسَّلوى كُلُوا مِنْ طَيِّباتِ ما رَزَقْناكُمْ وَ ما ظَلَمُونا وَلكِنْ كانُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ

And We outspread the clouds to shade you, and We sent down ` manna ' and ` " .۵۷ quail ' upon you, (saying): ` Eat of the good things We have provided for you '. (But they rebelled); to Us they did no harm, but they were putting themselves to ".destruction

Commentary : Verse ۵۷

! Abundant Bounties

As it is understood from Sura Al-Mā'idah, verses ۲۰ to ۲۲, when the Children of Israel were saved from the hostility of the Pharaoh and his army, Allah commanded them to move toward the Holy Land of Jerusalem and enter in it. But the Israelites did not obey the command saying: "...in this land are a people of exceeding strength: never shall we enter it until they leave it: if (once) they leave then shall we enter ", (the Holy .(Qur'ān ۵: ۲۲

Those rebellious people's disobedience did not stop there. They even told Moses (a.s.): "...Go thou, and thy Lord, and fight ye two, while we sit here (and watch) ", (Sura Al-.(Mā'idah, No. ۵, verse ۲۴

Moses became very displeased with their words and told the story of his grievance to the Lord. Finally, it was appointed that the Children of Israel wander through the .desert (of Sinai) in distraction for forty years

A group of those people regretted their wrong action and returned to the Lord repenting of that sin. Then, He bestowed His bounties on them again, a part of which :is referred to in the verse under discussion, where it says

"... ,And We outspread the clouds to shade you "

It is obvious how happy a wandering passenger, who has been walking under the hot sun in the desert that he has to pass through without any shelter from morning till evening, is when he receives the welcome shade of clouds!

True, it is probable that shady clouds sometimes appear in the sky of the deserts, but the verse clearly declares that the event was not an ordinary thing that occurred for the Children of Israel. It was the favour of Allah that often showered upon them and they enjoyed it.

At the same time, during that long span of time, the passengers in that hot dry desert needed food and sustenance. That problem was also solved for them by the Merciful Creator, as the verse continues saying:

"...and We sent down ` manna ' and ` quail ' upon you, ..."

"...(saying): ` Eat of the good things We have provided for you ...',"

in order that you may enjoy of the pure delicious nutritious sustenance and not disobey Him. Yet, they were not thankful to Him.

"...(But they rebelled); to Us they did no harm, but they were putting themselves to destruction."

The terms ` manna ' and ` salwa ' are differently interpreted by different philologists and commentators. However, the fact is: ` manna ' and ` salwa ' refer to the heavenly provisions the Israelites were provided with, without any strain or burden on their part.

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۵۸ وَ اِذْ قُلْنَا ادْخُلُوا هـذِهِ الْقَرْيَهَ فَكُلُوا مِنْهـا حَيْثُ شِئْتُمْ رَغَـداً وَادْخُلُوا الْبـابَ سُجَّداً وَ قُولُوا حِطَّهٌ نَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ خَطايـاكُمْ وَ سَنَزيدُ الْمُحْسِنينَ

۵۹ فَبَدَّلَ الَّذينَ ظَلَمُوا قَوْلاً غَيْرَ الَّذى قيلَ لَهُمْ فَاَنْزَلْنا عَلَى الَّذينَ ظَلَمُوا رِجْزاً مِنَ السَّماءِ بِما كانُوا يَفْسُقُونَ

And (remember) when We said, ` Enter this city (Jerusalem) and eat of the " .۵۸
plentiful therein, wherever you desire, and enter the gate with humility and ask forgiveness, We shall forgive you your sins, and give more (the portion of) those who ".' do good

But those who were unjust substituted a saying other than that which had been " .۵۹
spoken unto them, so We sent down upon those who were unjust a torment from ".heaven for what they used to pervert

Commentary : Verses ۵۸–۵۹

The Israelites' Intensive Obstinacy

Point

Here we are dealing with another aspect of the life of the Children of Israel :concerning their entrance in the Holy Land. It says

"...(And (remember) when We said: ` Enter this city (Jerusalem "

The term /qaryah/ in our ordinary speaking usually means: ` a village or a town ', but in the Qur'ān it is applied for any place where people are gathered to live in, whether it .is a city, town, or village. The meaning, here, is Jerusalem and the Holy Land

:Then it adds

"... ,and eat of the plentiful therein, wherever you desire..."

"... ,and enter the gate with humility and ask forgiveness..."

".' We shall forgive you your sins, and give more (the portion of) those who do good..."

It should be noted that the term /ḥittah/ philologically means: ` a putting down ', and, here, it means: ` a petition for the putting down of a heavy burden of sin from them '.and asking Allah to forgive their faults

The Lord commanded the Israelites to say that phrase with their whole hearts and spirits for the purpose of asking, thereby, for the putting down of their heavy burdens from them, because they needed to be put down from them before entering the Holy Land. And, they were promised that they would be forgiven their sins if they did perform the command accordingly. Maybe, it is for the same reason that one of the doors of Heaven is entitled ` Bāb-ul-Ḥittah ' (the door of forgiveness). Abū Ḥayyān Andulusī says that the objective meaning of /bāb/, here, is one of the doors of Jerusalem which is known as ` Bāb-ul-Ḥittah '.(1)

The verse finally proclaims that as for the doers of good, besides forgiving their sins, there will be endowed some additional bounties and rewards upon them, too. It says:

"...and give more (the portion of) those who do good."

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Refusal by some to repent

However, Allah ordered them to express this phrase sincerely as a sign of their repentance and request for forgiveness in order to show their humility unto Him. The Lord promised them that He would forgive them their sins if they followed through with the command. In that case, He would also increase His favour and reward for the good doers among them along with the forgiveness of their faults.

But, as we know and are acquainted with the stubbornness and obstinacy of the Children of Israel, some of them even refused to utter the phrase and mockingly they said another incongruous word (Hinta) `wheat' instead of it. Then, the Qur'ān says:

" But those who were unjust substituted a saying other than that

which had been spoken unto them, ..."

so We sent down upon those who were unjust a torment from heaven for what..." ".they used to pervert

Divine Punishment in some form or other awaits those who unwarrantedly and unjustly change the word of Allah and His covenant, to something other than the .original presented to them

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At-Tafsir-ul-Kashif, vol. ۱, p. ۱۰۹ ۱ -۱

۶۰ وَإِذِ اسْتَسْقى مُوسى لِقَوْمِهِ فَقُلْنَا اضْرِبْ بِعَصاكَ الْحَجَرَ فَانْفَجَرَتْ مِنْهُ اثْنَتا عَشْرَةَ عَيْنًا قَدْ عَلِمَ كُلُّ أُناسٍ مَشْرَبَهُمْ كُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا مِنْ رِزْقِ اللَّهِ وَلا تَعْثَوْا فِی الْأَرْضِ مُفْسِدِينَ

And (remember) when Moses sought water for his people, so We said: ` Strike " .۶۰ the rock with your staff. ' Then there gushed forth from it twelve springs. Each (group of) people knew their (respective) drinking-place. ` Eat and drink of Allah's provision, ".'and commit you not evil in the earth, doing corruption

Commentary : Verse ۶۰

! The Miracle of Water Gushing Forth in the Desert

Again in this verse, Allah has pointed out one of the important favours bestowed upon :the Children of Israel, saying

"... ,And (remember) when Moses sought water for his people "

When Moses (a.s.) prayed for water, Allah accepted his plea as the Qur'ān says: "...so "...'.We said: ` Strike the rock with your staff

"... .Then there gushed forth from it twelve springs..."

Each of those springs flowed for a definite tribe so that among all of the tribes of "... .Israelites: "... Each (group of) people knew their (respective) drinking place

There are a variety of ideas about what kind of stone that rock was and how Moses (a.s.) was supposed to strike that rock, and in what form the flow of water appeared from it. What the Qur'ān says is not more than that Moses (a.s.) struck the rock with .his staff and then twelve springs gushed forth therefrom

This incident is referred to in Exod ۱۷: ۱-۶, with the only difference being that the number of twelve springs that gushed forth

.from the rock is not mentioned

However, the Lord, on one hand, sent ` Manna ' and ` Salwa ' (quails) for them, and, on the other hand, provided them enough water, easily available, and told them: "...` Eat and drink of Allah's provision, and commit you not evil in the earth, doing ".' corruption

In fact, the Lord advises them, as a showing of gratitude for these great bounties, that at least they should lay stubbornness and obstinacy aside and stop hurting .(.prophets (a.s

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p:۱۹۷

۶۱ وَاِذْ قُلْتُمْ یـا مُوسـی لَنْ نَصْبِرَ عَلی طَعامٍ واحِـدٍ فَادْعُ لَنا رَبَّکَ یُخْرِجْ لَنا مِمّا تُنْبِتُ الْاَرْضُ مِنْ بَقْلِها وَ قِثّائِها وَ فُومِها وَ عَدَسِـها وَ
بَصَـلِها قالَ اَتَسْـتَبْدِلُونَ الَّذی هُوَ اَدْنی بِالَّذی هُوَ خَیْرٌ اِهْبِطُوا مِصْراً فَاِنَّ لَکُمْ ما سَاَلْتُمْ وَ ضُرِبَتْ عَلَیْهِمُ الذِّلَّهُ وَالْمَسْکَنَهُ وَ باؤُ بِغَضَبٍ
مِنَ اللّهِ ذلِکَ بِاَنَّهُمْ کانُوا یَکْفُرُونَ بِایاتِ اللّهِ وَ یَقْتُلُونَ النَّبِیّنَ بِغَیْرِ الْحَقِّ ذلِکَ بِما عَصَوْا وَ کانُوا یَعْتَدُونَ

۶۱. " (And (remember) when you said: ` O' Moses! never can we (always

,endure one sort of food, so beseech your Lord for us

to produce for us of what the earth groweth, its pot-herbs, and

:cucumbers, garlic, lentils, and onions '. He (Moses) said

?Would you have in exchange what is worse for what is better `

' !Enter a city, thus you shall get that which you demanded

Abasement and humiliation were stamped upon them

;and they incurred wrath from Allah

that was because they went on rejecting Allah's Signs

.and slaying the prophets unjustly

".That was because they disobeyed, and went on transgressing

Commentary : Verse ۶۱

Demanding a Variety of Food

To continue the description mentioned in the former verses about the different bounties Allah bestowed on the Children of Israel, here in the verse under discussion, the unthankfulness and ingratitude of the Israelites for those great favours is .illustrated

The verse indicates how obstinate they were, so much so that

perhaps no people can be found in the history of the human race similar to them from .the point of being ungrateful for Divine favours

At first it says: " And (remember) when you said: ` O' Moses! never can we (always) "... ,endure one sort of food

so beseech your Lord for us, to produce for us of what the earth groweth, its pot-..." "... .'herbs, and cucumbers, garlic, lentils and onions

But in reply to them: " He (Moses) said: ` Would you have in exchange what is worse "...?for what is better

"...' !Now that it is so: "... Enter a city, thus you shall get that which you demanded

Then, the Qur'ān adds that: "... Abasement and humiliation were stamped upon them, "...;and they incurred wrath from Allah

that was because they went on rejecting Allah's Signs and slaying the prophets..." "... .unjustly

".That was because they disobeyed, and went on transgressing..."

? Why were the Israelites Stamped with Abasement and Humiliation

As the above verse indicates, they incurred humiliation and wretchedness because of two things : the first was because they went on disobeying the orders of Allah and .straying from the path of monotheism to that of infidelity

The second factor was that they used to kill the righteous and apostles of Allah. This hard-heartedness and heedlessness of the Divine laws and even against most human laws, that even today clearly continues among the Jews, might be the cause of that .humiliation and abasement

Right now, as we are writing these lines, the territory of Lebanon is being invaded savagely by this hard-hearted tribe where thousands of men and women, among whom are innocent, old persons, infant babies, hospital patients and the like, are

unjustly and tyrannically being slain in a pitiable way. Their bodies are lying lifelessly on the ground in wait of burial. We are sure that this tribe will certainly have to pay the .penalty for their cruelty in the future

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p:۱۹۹

۶۲ اِنَّ الَّذينَ امَنُوا وَالَّذينَ هادُوا وَالنَّصارى وَالصّابِئينَ مَنْ امَنَ بِاللّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْاخِرِ وَ عَمِلَ صالِحًا فَلَهُمْ اَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلاهُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

Verily those who believed (in the Prophet of Islam), and those of Jews and " .۶۲ Christians and Sabians, whoever believed (truly) in Allah and the Last Day, and worked righteousness for them is their reward with their Lord, and no fear shall be " .upon them, nor shall they grieve

Commentary : Verse ۶۲

A General Principle for Salvation

The Qur'ān, here, points to a general and common principle when it proclaims that that which is worthy is ` truth ' and ` reality '. With Allah, only ` true Faith ' and ` good .deeds ' are accepted

Verily, those who believed (in the Prophet of Islam) and those of Jews and Christians " and Ṣabians, whoever believed (truly) in Allah and the Last Day, and worked "... ,righteousness for them is their reward with their Lord

:Therefore, they will have no fear in the future nor any grief for their past

".and no fear shall be upon them, nor shall they grieve..."

This verse, with nearly the same form, has occurred in Sura Al-Mā'idah, No. ۵, verse ۶۹; and with a further variation on the same subject in Sura Al-Hajj, No. ۲۲, verse ۱۷

A careful study over the verses cited after this verse in Sura Al-Mā'idah, makes it clear that the Jews and Christians boasted that their religions were better than other .religions. They imagined that all of Heaven would be for them alone, exclusively

That very pride, perhaps, was seen in the manner of some Muslims, too. The current verse denotes that superficial faith, especially

with the lack of doing good deeds, whether it proceeds from Muslims or Jews, Christians and Ṣabians, or the followers of any other religion, is worthless. Faith in Allah and the Last Day of Judgment is noted worthy by Allah when it is true, pure, and sincere, and accompanied with righteous deeds. Only this agendum deserves .rewards and causes peace, security, and salvation for a believer

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? Who are the Ṣabians

There are a variety of opinions as to who the Ṣabians are. Here you are introduced to a few of them which are usually referred to. For example, the description cited in: ` An :Arabic English Lexicon, Part ۴,' p. ۱۶۴۰, by Edward William Lame is, in brief, as follows

The term /ṣābi'ūn/ in the Kurān is said to mean: ` Those who depart from one religion to another ...[The Ṣabians,] said to worship the stars secretly, and openly to profess themselves to belong to the Christians: They are called /aṣ-ṣābi'ah/ and /aṣ-ṣābi'ūn/ : and they assert that they are of the religion of Ṣābi the son of Sheyth [or Sheth] the son of Adam: their appellation may also be pronounced /aṣ-ṣābiyūn/...or the Ṣābi'ūn are a certain class of the people who possess revealed scripture: or a people whose religion resembles that of the Christians, except that their Qiblah is towards the place where blows the [south, or southerly, wind called] Janūb... or according to some, their Qiblah is the Ka`bah: and they assert that they are of the religion of Noah. It is said that they are thus called in relation to Ṣābi the son of Lāmak [or Lamech], the brother of Noah. It is said that they are worshippers of angels: and it said that they are the worshippers of the stars: and that their appellation is Arabic; from /ṣaba'/ ` he departed from a religion '; or from /ṣaba/ ` he inclined ', because of their inclining from .Truth to falsehood

Another idea about ` Ṣabians ', the appellation mentioned in the Holy Qur'ān, is what the known scholar, Rāqib, cites in his book, ` Mufradāt '. He says: " They are a group of followers of Noah (a.s.), and their name mentioned along with the names of Believers, Jews, and Christians, is also an evidence that they have been a religious group of

people, believing in one of the heavenly religions who believed in God and the ".Hereafter, too

Some other commentators have said that the idea that some have called them pagans and star worshippers, or some others have considered them Zoroastrians, does not seem right, because Ṣabians believed that: first, the heavenly Holy Books were revealed to Adam (a.s.) and then to Noah (a.s.) and after him to Sām (a.s.), then to Rām (a.s.) and thereafter to Abraham (a.s.), then to Moses (a.s.) and after him to .John (a.s.) the son of Zachariah, all of which were sent rightfully and Divinely

? ' Who are the ` People of the Book

The Qur'ānic phrase / 'ahlul kitāb / ` the People of the Book ' has occurred in more than ٣٠ different verses of the Qur'ān where it mostly means both the Jews and the .Christians or either of them

The above mentioned Arabic-English Lexicon, part one, page ١٢١ explains the phrase / 'ahlul-kitāb / thus: ` (the people of the Scripture, or Bible; and) the readers, or reciters, '.of the Mosaic Law, and of the Gospel

Apparently, all the adherents of the prophets who had revealed Books, the clearest example of whom are Jews and Christians, may be called ` the People of the Book '. If so, we can also consider the Prophet's tradition when he was asked about the number of the Books Allah revealed and he (p.b.u.h.) replied: " One hundred and four books were revealed: ten books to Adam (a.s.), fifty books to Shīth, thirty books to Ukhnūkh (Enoch) and he is the first one who wrote by pen, ten books to Abraham, the Turah to Moses, the Ingeel to Jesus, Zabūr to David, and the Qur'ān to Muhammad (the (Prophet of Islam)."(١)

Majm-ul-Bayan, vol. ١٠, p. ٤٧۶ ١ -١

۶۳ وَإِذْ أَخَذْنا ميثاقَكُمْ وَ رَفَعْنا فَوْقَكُمُ الطُّورَ خُذُوا ما آتَيْناكُمْ بِقُوَّةٍ وَاذْكُرُوا ما فيهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

۶۴ ثُمَّ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ ذلِكَ فَلَوْلا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَ رَحْمَتُهُ لَكُنْتُمْ مِنَ الْخاسِرينَ

۶۳. " And (remember) when We made a covenant with you, and raised the Tūr (Mountain) above you; (saying): ` Hold you fast that which We have given you with the strength, and remember all that is therein (to do accordingly); haply you shall guard yourselves (against evil)'."

۶۴. " Thereafter, you turned back, and had it not been for the Grace and Mercy of Allah on you, you had certainly been among the losers."

Commentary : Verses ۶۳-۶۴

Hold the Signs of Allah Firmly !

In these verses, the subject of taking a covenant from the Children of Israel for the practicing of the contents of the Turah and, then, breaching that covenant, is pointed out. At first it says:

" And (remember) when We made a covenant with you, and raised the Tūr (Mountain) above you; ..."

"... (saying): ` Hold you fast that which We have given you with the strength, ..."

"... and remember all that is therein (to do accordingly); haply you shall guard yourselves (against evil)'."

*****

But you people neglected your covenant.

" Thereafter, you turned back, ..."

"... and had it not been for the Grace and Mercy of Allah on you, you had certainly been among the losers. "

The objective of the covenant, here, is the same that has been mentioned in verse ۴۰ of the current Sura and what is in verse ۸۳ and ۸۴, which will be discussed later. The items of that covenant are: worshipping only Allah; treating parents, relations, orphans, and those in need with kindness; speaking to and treating people fairly; attending and being steadfast in ritual prayers, paying alms, avoiding shedding blood, .the like of which had been mentioned in the Turah, too

Sura Al-Mā'idah, No. ۵, verse ۱۲, also denotes that Allah had taken a covenant from the Children of Israel to believe in all of the Divine prophets and help them, and practice regular charity in the way of Allah. Then, at the end of the same verse, Allah promises that if they keep this covenant and actually do it, they will be allowed to .abide in Paradise

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? How was the Mountain Raised over the Israelites' Heads

The leading famous commentator, the Late Ṭabarsī, has narrated from ` Abūzeyd ' that when Moses (a.s.) returned from Mount Sinai and brought the Turah with him, he told his people that he had brought a Divine Book consisting of some religious instructions and rules about lawful and unlawful things. He told them to take the instructions that Allah had ordained and practically observe them in their lives.(۱)

But the Jews, with the excuse that he (a.s.) had brought them difficult duties to perform, disobeyed and exceeded the limits. The Lord commanded the angels to raise .a great big rock from Tūr Mountain above them

At that moment Moses (a.s.) announced that if they promised to perform the orders of Allah and repented for their disobedience, that punishment would be removed from .over them, else they would be destroyed

The Jews, who expected that the Mountain would fall on them at any moment, submitted and accepted the Turah and prostrated for Allah. Then, finally, that chastisement was warded off because of their

Majm-ul-Bayan, vol. ۱, p. ۱۲۸ ۱ -۱

.repentance

This very occurrence, with a little difference, is mentioned in verse ٩٣ of the current Sura; and in Sura An-Nisā', No. ۴, verse ١٠۴; and in Sura Al-A`rāf, No. ٧, verse ١٧١. It is necessary to note, here, that as for the suspending mountain and as to how it could stand high above as a covering overhead for the Israelites, some commentators believe that it was by the command of Allah that Tūr Mount was shaken and taken up from its place and, then, suspended above them as a canopy.(١) A more detailed .explanation will be referred to when commenting on Sura Al-'A`rāf, No. ٧, verse ١٧١

The above mentioned event as described in the Qur'ān was quite known by the Jews, who had these original statements in the Turah about it with them. Besides that, this event is also recorded in Talmud Aboda Sara. ١: ٢ which says: ` I will cover you with .the mountain like a roof '. Talmud

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Majma`-ul-Bayān, vol. ١, p.١٢٨ ١ -١

۶۵ وَلَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمُ الَّذینَ اعْتَدَوْا مِنْکُمْ فِی السَّبْتِ فَقُلْنا لَهُمْ کُونُوا قِرَدَةً خاسِئینَ

۶۶ فَجَعَلْناها نَکالاً لِما بَیْنَ یَدَیْها وَما خَلْفَها وَ مَوْعِظَةً لِلْمُتَّقینَ

۶۵. " And certainly you have known those among you who exceeded the limits on the Sabbath, so We said to them: ` Be you (as) apes despised and rejected '. "

۶۶. " So We made it an exemplary punishment to those who witnessed it and to their posterity and an admonishment to the pious ones. "

Commentary : Verses ۶۵-۶۶

Those Who Exceeded on the Sabbath!

These two verses, like the previous verses, point out the disobedience and transgression dominating the souls of the Jews, and their intensive interest in economic gain.

At first, it says: " And certainly you have known those among you who exceeded the limits on the Sabbath, ... "

And, also, you have known that: "... so We said to them: ` Be you (as) apes, despised and rejected '. "

Some may think that the present state of the Israelites and their apparent progress, after the first and the second World Wars or after their unlawful occupation of the Holy Land does not tally with this but yet they are hated by most nations and they have no rest in the real sense of the term, and the term ` a Jew ' has passed into a proverb for a niggardly, miserly person this is due to their own vanities and their hatred towards the others which, for example, they have shown in many places such as Palestine and Lebanon, both openly and hiddenly, during these recent years.

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" So We made it an exemplary punishment to those who witnessed it

and to their posterity... "

".and an admonishment to the pious ones…"

It is worthy to note that Imam Bāqir (a.s.) and Imam Ṣādiq (a.s.) are narrated from, who, on the meaning of this verse, have said: " The purpose of the phrase /mā bayna yadayha/ ` those who witnessed it ' is the generation of that time, and the objective of the phrase /mā xalfahā/ ` their posterity ' is about us Muslims."(١) . That is, that exemplary lesson was not exclusive to the Israelites alone, but it was meant for all of us, the Muslims, too; or, all who come after them until the Day of Judgement and who .do the same as they did

: Explanation

(.Divine Miracles of Moses (a.s

Whenever an apostle of Allah wanted to introduce himself to his people as a true, authentic Messenger of Allah, he would prove his claim by performing some miracles .given by Him

Here, it must be remembered that the following wonderful events wrought by divine and supernatural phenomena are counted in the Holy Qur'ān as the miracles given to Moses (a.s.) as the proof of his prophethood, each of which will be discussed in its .appropriate place

:They are as follows

(The Rod of Moses (a.s.) becoming a serpent. (٧: ١٠٧, ٢۶: ٣٢ .١

(The Palm of Moses (a.s.) shining brightly. (٧: ١٠٨, ٢۶: ٣٣ .٢

(The dividing of the sea. (٢: ۵٠ .٣

(The gushing of water from the rock. (٢: ۶٠, ٢: ٧۴ .۴

(The shower of manna and quails from heaven. (٢:۵٧ .۵

(The shadowing of the cloud over the Israelites' heads. (٢: ۵٧, ٢: ٩٣ .۶

(The raising of the dead to life. (۲: ۵۶, ۲: ۷۳ .۷

(The suspension of the mount above the heads of the people. (۲: ۶۳ .۸

:The transformation of the transgressors into despised apes. (۲: ۶۵, ۷ .۹

.(۱۶۶

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p:۲۰۷

Majma`-ul-Bayān, vol. ۱, p. ۱۳۰ ۱ -۱

Verses ۶۷–۷۴; Arabic

۶۷ وَ اِذْ قالَ مُوسی لِقَوْمِه اِنَّ اللّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ اَنْ تَذْبَحُوا بَقَرَةً قالُوا اَتَتَّخِذُنا هُزُواً قالَ اَعُوذُ بِاللّهِ اَنْ اَكُونَ مِنَ الْجاهِلينَ

۶۸ قالُوا ادْعُ لَنا رَبَّک يُبَيِّنْ لَنا ما هِیَ قالَ اِنَّهُ يَقُولُ اِنَّها بَقَرَةٌ لا فارِضٌ وَلا بِكْرٌ عَوانٌ بَيْنَ ذلِک فَافْعَلُوا ما تُؤْمَرُونَ

۶۹ قالُوا ادْعُ لَنا رَبَّک يُبَيِّنْ لَنا ما لَوْنُها قالَ اِنَّهُ يَقُولُ اِنَّها بَقَرَةٌ صَفْراءُ فاقِعٌ لَوْنُها تَسُرُّ النّاظِرينَ

۷۰ قالُوا ادْعُ لَنا رَبَّک يُبَيِّنْ لَنا ما هِیَ اِنَّ الْبَقَرَ تَشابَهَ عَلَيْنا وَ اِنّا اِنْ شاءَ اللّهُ لَمُهْتَدُونَ

۷۱ قالَ اِنَّهُ يَقُولُ اِنَّها بَقَرَةٌ لا ذَلُولٌ تُثيرُ الْاَرْضَ وَلا تَسْقِی الْحَرْثَ مُسَلَّمَةٌ لا شِيَةَ فيها قالُوا الأن جِئْتَ بِالْحَقِّ فَذَبَحُوها وَ ما كادُوا يَفْعَلُونَ

۷۲ وَ اِذْ قَتَلْتُمْ نَفْسًا فَادّارَءْتُمْ فيها وَاللّهُ مُخْرِجٌ ما كُنْتُمْ تَكْتُمُونَ

۷۳ فَقُلْنَا اضْرِبُوهُ بِبَعْضِها كَذلِک يُحْيِ اللّهُ الْمَوْتی وَيُريكُمْ اياتِه لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ

۷۴ ثُمَّ قَسَتْ قُلُوبُكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ ذلِک فَهِیَ كَالْحِجارَهِ اَوْ اَشَدُّ قَسْوَةً وَ اِنَّ مِنَ الْحِجارَهِ لَما يَتَفَجَّرُ مِنْهُ الْاَنْهارُ وَ اِنَّ مِنْها لَما يَشَّقَّقُ فَيَخْرُجُ مِنْهُ الْماءُ وَ اِنَّ مِنْها لَما يَهْبِطُ مِنْ خَشْيَهِ اللّهِ وَ مَا اللّهُ بِغافِلٍ عَمّا تَعْمَلُونَ

p:۲۰۸

And (remember) when Moses said to his people : ` Surely, Allah commands you " .۶۷
that you should sacrifice a cow '. They said : ` Do you mock us ?' He said : ` I take
" ' !refuge with Allah from being one of the ignorant

They said ` Ask your Lord for us to make it clear to us what she is.' Moses said : ` " .۶۸
He says : Surely she is a cow neither old nor young, but of middle age; so do what you
".' are commanded

They said : ` Ask your Lord for us to make it clear to us what colour she should " .۶۹
be.' Moses replied : ` He says she should be a yellow cow, bright in colour, giving
".' delight to the beholders

They said : ` Ask your Lord for us to make it clear to us what kind of cow must it " .۷۰
be, for surely to us the cows are all alike, and, if Allah wills, we shall surely be guided
" '.aright

Moses) said: ` Verily, He says : Verily, she is a cow not (yet) trained to till the soil)" .۷۱
or to water the fields; sound and without blemish. ' They said : ` Now you have
brought the truth.' Then they offered her in sacrifice, though they had not the mind to
".(do (it

And (remember) when you killed a man and disputed thereon : but Allah was to " .۷۲
".bring forth what you were hiding

So, We said : ` Strike him (the corpse) with a part of it (the sacrificed cow) '. Thus, " .۷۳
".Allah gives life to the dead and shows you of His signs, so that you might understand

Then your hearts hardened after that as stones or even worse in hardness; for " .۷۴
verily, among stones there are some from which rivers gush forth, and others that
split asunder and water issues out of them, and others tumble down through fear of
".Allah, and Allah is not heedless of what you do

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Commentary : Verses ۶۷-۷۴

The Story of the Israelites' Cow

Among what we have already studied about the Children of Israel in Sura Al-Baqarah, all of the facts were mentioned shortly and briefly.

The event of the Israelites' Cow which is referred to in the above verses, in contrast to all of the previous incidents, is explained in detail and comprehensively. This is so, perhaps, for the reason that this story is mentioned in the Qur'ān only once.

Besides that, there are many instructive subjects involved in it which requires such an extensive explication. One of these subjects which is vividly seen throughout the story, is the persistency of the Israelites in seeking for excuses. It also illustrates their level of faith in the revelations brought forth by Moses (a.s.). Most important of all is that the story provides clear emphatic evidence to the possibility of the Resurrection.

As it is understood from the Holy Qur'ān and its commentaries, the incident was described that one of the Israelites was murdered in a mysterious way, in which his murderer was not at all known.

So, there arose a dispute among the different tribes and divisions of the people as to who murdered the man. Every tribe accused the members of another tribe of the crime and announced that the members of its own tribe were innocent. For its judgement and solution, the problem was brought to the Apostle Moses (a.s.). One one hand, that crime was committed hiddenly and the murderer of the man could not be found by any ordinary means employed at that time. On the other hand, that dispute might have led to a great complicated disturbance among the Children of Israel. Then, finally Moses (a.s.), by the help of the Grace and Guidance of Allah and through a miraculous way, whose explanation will come later, solved the problem.

The Qur'ān begins the description of the event as thus:

"And (remember) when Moses said to his people:

"... .' Surely, Allah commands you that you should sacrifice a cow `

"...' ? They said : ` Do you mock us ..."

"." !He said : ` I take refuge with Allah from being one of the ignorant ..."

p:۲۱۰

That is, causing division and mocking others are acts of the

.ignorant and never is a prophet of Allah of such people

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When the Israelites realized that it was not a mockery and the matter was serious, " "...',They said : ` Ask your Lord for us to make it clear to us what she is

The phrase : ` Ask your Lord ' which is repeated several times in their demands, carries a kind of hidden impoliteness and ridicule in itself. It seems that they considered the Lord of Moses (a.s.) a different

.Lord from their own Lord

: However, as a reply to their demand

Moses said : ` He says: Surely she is a cow neither old nor young, but of middle... " "...' ;age

In order to stop them from prolonging the matter by bringing new excuses forth to postpone that fulfillment of the command of Allah, at the end of the statement, it has : been added

".' so do what you are commanded ..."

.But, they still continued their insistence and obstinacy

"...'.They said : ` Ask your Lord for us to make it clear to us what colour she should be "

Moses replied : ` He says she should be a yellow cow, bright in colour, giving delight ..." ".' to the beholders

.Anyhow, this cow should be very good and interesting in colour

The colour should be so bright and beautiful that any beholder wonders and becomes .delighted when looking at it

It is amazing that they were not satisfied with that and went on seeking for excuses .by which, every time, they made the fulfillment of their duty more difficult

A tradition says that Imam Ridā (a.s.) has said that any cow would have been sufficient, but they imposed the particulars upon themselves, and the more they did so, the more did Allah impose the restrictions as a punishment for their persistent demands for unnecessary details. All

this, while Moses (a.s.) acting under inspiration, was driving them to purchase a particular cow belonging to a particular man who was very holy and pious and deserved to be favoured. They had to pay him an enormous price for this cow which .was the only one then available

(Hence they were very near to not doing it. (١

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They said : ` Ask your Lord for us to make it clear to us what kind of a cow must it " "...,be

for surely to us the cows are all alike, ..." "... and, if Allah wills, we shall surely be ..." ".'guided aright

****

(Again, "(Moses) said :` Verily, He says: Verily, she is a cow not (yet

"...'.trained to till the soil or to water the fields; sound and without blemish

They said : ` Now you have brought the truth.'..." So, they tried with much effort to ..." .find that particular cow, and, finally,they found it

".(Then they offered her in sacrifice, though they had not the mind to do (it ..."

****

After describing this story in detail, again the Qur'ān retells it briefly, and generally : through the following two verses, thus

And (remember) when you killed a man and disputed thereon : but Allah was to bring " ".forth what you were hiding

"...'.(So, We said : ` Strike him (the corpse) with a part of it (the sacrificed cow "

"...Thus, Allah gives life to the dead ..."

".and shows you of His signs, so that you might understand ..."

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Nu-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. ۱, p. ۸۸-۸۹ ۱ -۱

In the last verse of the verses under discussion, the hardness of the hearts of the Israelites is referred to. It points out that after witnessing all these events and observing the Signs of Allah and the miraculous evidence that Moses (a.s.) prepared for them, yet their hearts became hard, even harder than stone, because, there are some rocks that bring forth water, or shatter and fall down for the fear of Allah. It :says

"... ;Then your hearts hardened after that as stones or even worse in hardness "

"...,for verily, among stones there are some from which rivers gush forth ..."

"...,and others that split asunder and water issues out of them ..."

."... ,and others tumble down through fear of Allah ..."

So, your hearts are even harder than these rocks, because neither a spring of passion, love, or knowledge flows out of them nor tremble they from the fear of Allah. :Then in the last sentence of the verse, it says

".and Allah is not heedless of what you do ..."

This is a subtle threat against this group of Israelites and all others who behave like .them or do the same as they did

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Verses ۷۵-۷۷

۷۵ اَفَتَطْمَعُونَ اَنْ یُؤْمِنُوا لَکُمْ وَ قَدْ کانَ فَریقٌ مِنْهُمْ یَسْمَعُونَ کَلامَ اللّهِ ثُمَّ یُحَرِّفُونَهُ مِنْ بَعْدِ ما عَقَلُوهُ وَ هُمْ یَعْلَمُونَ

۷۶ وَ اِذا لَقُوا الَّذینَ امَنُوا قالُوا امَنّا وَ اِذا خَلا بَعْضُهُمْ اِلی بَعْضٍ قالُوا اَتُحَدِّثُونَهُمْ بِما فَتَحَ اللّهُ عَلَیْکُمْ لِیُحاجُّوکُمْ بِهِ عِنْدَ رَبِّکُمْ اَفَلا تَعْقِلُونَ

۷۷ اَوَلا یَعْلَمُونَ اَنَّ اللّهَ یَعْلَمُ ما یُسِرُّونَ وَ ما یُعْلِنُونَ

۷۵ " Do you then hope that they would believe in you (in Faith), and a party among them indeed used to hear the Word of Allah, then perverted it after they had understood it, and they know (this) ? "

۷۶. " And when they meet those who have Faith, they say : ` We believe ', but when they are alone with one another, they say : ` Do you speak to them of what Allah has revealed to you, that they may thereby dispute with you about this before your Lord ? Have you then no sense ? ' "

۷۷. " What ! Do they not know that Allah knows what they hide and what they make known ? "

Occasion of Revelation:

Upon the occasion of the revelation of these first two verses, some of the commentators have narrated from Imam Bāqir (a.s.) who has said: "A group of the Jews, who had not enmity with the truth, when they met the Muslims they would tell them of what had been mentioned in the Turah about the specialties of Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.). The leaders of the Jews understood the matter and told them to avoid informing Muslims of what was cited in the Turah about the epithets of Prophet Muhammad(p.b.u.h.) lest they would argue with the Jews about

(it before their Lord. Then this verse was revealed." (1)

:Commentary

!A Futile Expectation

Point

As noted from these verses, the Qur'ān has discontinued the story of the Israelites and, with an instructive conclusion, has turned to the Muslim believers, saying : " Do you then hope that they would believe in you (in Faith), and a party among them indeed used to hear the Word of Allah, then perverted it after they had understood it, "?(and they know (this

Therefore, when you see that they reject the inspiring words of the Qur'ān and the miracles of the holy Prophet of Islam (p.b.u.h.), you should not be annoyed. They are the children of the same people who, as the elected members of the tribe, went to Mount Sinai, heard the words of Allah, and understood His instructions, but when they .returned they altered them

It is perceived from the phrase : ` ... and a party among them indeed...", that not all of them but a party, who probably formed the majority in them, were of those who .perverted Allah's Words

It is cited in ` Asbāb-un-Nuzūl ' that when some of the Jews returned from Mount Sinai, they told their people : " We heard that Allah ordered Moses, ` Whenever you can do My instructions do them, but when you cannot, leave them ", and this was the .first perversion

However, at the advent of the Prophet of Islam (p.b.u.h.), it was expected that the Jews would accept this religion before others embraced it, because they were the followers of the Book, whereas the pagans were not. Besides that, they had learnt the epithets of the Prophet of Islam (p.b.u.h.) from their own books. But the Holy Qur'ān says that, considering their previous bad reputation, your hope is of no avail. The reason is that some deviated characteristics which dominated the spirits of this group,

caused them to separate from truth, though it was well within the realm of their ability .to embrace it

The next verse uncovers another bitter fact about this deceitful

p:۲۱۵

Majma`-ul-Bayān, vol. ۱, p. ۱۴۲ ۱ -۱

: hypocritical group. It says

?What Allah has revealed to you

"...,'And when they meet those who have Faith, they say: ` We believe "

:but when they are alone with one another, they say ..."

"... ,Do you speak to them of what Allah has revealed to you `

that they may thereby dispute with you about this ..."

" ' ? before your Lord ? Have you then no sense

In commenting on this very verse, this probability also exists that the initial words of the verse are about the hypocritical Jews who pretended to be believers in the presence of the Muslims but in their absence they denied it. They even scorned those .pure-hearted Jews who had conveyed the secrets of the Turah to the Muslims

At any rate, this is a confirmation to what was said in the previous verse that a group .with such attributes governing their spirits should not be expected to become faithful

The phrase : / fataḥallāhu `alaykum / ` what Allah has revealed to you ' may mean : ` the Divine command which was in the authority of the Children of Israel '. Or, the phrase may refer to the idea that Allah had opened the doors of the divine secrets .and the prophecies about the coming religion unto them

It is noteworthy that this verse clearly shows that the Faith of this hypocritical group in Allah was so weak and hollow that they considered Him as an ordinary person and imagined that if they could conceal a fact from the Muslims, it would be concealed .from Allah, too

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Then, in the next verse, it frankly says : " What ! Do they not know

" ? that Allah knows what they hide and what they make known

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p:۲۱۶

Verses ۷۸–۷۹

۷۸ وَ مِنْهُمْ اُمِّيُّونَ لا يَعْلَمُونَ الْكِتابَ اِلاّ اَمانِيَّ وَ اِنْ هُمْ اِلاّ يَظُنُّونَ

۷۹ فَوَيْلٌ لِلَّذينَ يَكْتُبُونَ الْكِتابَ بِاَيْـديهِمْ ثُمَّ يَقُولُونَ هـذا مِنْ عِنْدِاللّهِ لِيَشْتَرُوا بِه ثَمَنًا قَليلاً فَوَيْلٌ لَهُمْ مِمّا كَتَبَتْ اَيْديهِمْ وَ وَيْلٌ لَهُمْ مِمّا يَكْسِبُونَ

۷۸. " And there are among them illiterates, who know not the Book, but only fancies and mere conjectures. "

۷۹. " So, woe to those who write the Book with their hands and then say:` This is from Allah,' so that they may sell it for a little price, so, woe to them for what their hands have written and woe to them for what they earn."

Occasion of Revelation:

A group of the learned men of the Jews altered the epithets of the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) mentioned in the Turah. This perversion was contrived to protect their social positions and benefits which they used to obtain from their common people over the years.

When the Prophet of Islam (p.b.u.h.) announced his mission and they recognized his epithets coincided with what was mentioned in the Turah, they were afraid that their profits would be endangered if the fact became evident. Therefore, they wrote some epithets completely different from what was actually cited in the Turah.

The ordinary Jews, who had heard the true epithets of the Prophet of Islam (p.b.u.h.), more or less, asked their scholars frequently whether this Prophet was the same promised prophet whose advent they had given them glad tidings of. Then the Jewish savants and scholars decided to recite some perverted verses from the Turah to them in order to make them content thereby.

p:۲۱۷

The Jewish Learned Men's Plots of Oppression Against the Laymen

Following the previous description about the vicious deeds of the Jews, these verses divide them into two definite groups : the laymen and the deceitful learned men. A few of the Jewish scholars, of course, accepted the truth and believed in Islam and joined the community of Muslims. It says :

"And there are among them illiterates, who know not the Book, but only fancies and mere conjectures."

The phrase /ummīyūn/ ` the illiterates ' is the plural form of the term /ummī/ which, here, means an illiterate person who remains the same in his native endowments as he was when he was born without any external education or training from anyone whosoever; and this state is ordinarily known as illiteracy. Or, this case also occurs because some mothers, because of their naive motherly love for their children, ignorantly do not let their children separate from them and go to schools to study.

The term /'amānīyy/ is the plural form of /'amnīyyah/ ` conjecture ', and, here, it may refer to the privileges, vain desires, wishful thinking and mere conjectures of the Jews that they considered for themselves.

The second group was the Jewish priests and savants who often altered the facts for their own benefit, as the Qur'ān says :

"So, woe to those who write the Book with their hands and then say:

` This is from Allah '; ... "

"... so that they may sell it for a little price, ..."

"... so, woe to them for what their hands have written..."

"... and woe to them for what they earn."

From the last meanings of the verse, it is well understood that they had used impious

.means and had come up with an incorrect conclusion

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p:۲۱۸

۸۰ وَقالُوا لَنْ تَمَسَّنَا النّارُ اِلّا اَیّامًا مَعْدُودَهً قُلْ اَتَّخَذْتُمْ عِنْدَاللّهِ عَهْداً فَلَنْ یُخْلِفَ اللّهُ عَهْدَهُ اَمْ تَقُولُونَ عَلَی اللّهِ ما لا تَعْلَمُونَ

۸۱ بَلی مَنْ کَسَبَ سَیِّئَهً وَ اَحاطَتْ بِهِ خَطیئَتُهُ فَاُولئِکَ اَصْحابُ النّارِهُمْ فیها خالِدُونَ

۸۲ وَالَّذینَ امَنُوا وَ عَمِلُوا الصّالِحاتِ اُول-ئِکَ اَصْحابُ الْجَنَّهِ هُمْ فیها خالِدُونَ

۸۰. " And they said : ` The Fire shall not touch us but for a few days '. Say: ` Have you taken such a promise from Allah, for He never fails in His promise ? Or do you speak against Allah what you do not know ? ' "

۸۱. " Yea! whoever earns evil and is encompassed by his sins, these are the inhabitants of the Fire, therein shall they abide forever."

۸۲. " And those who have Faith and do deeds of righteousness they are the inhabitants of Paradise, therein shall they abide forever."

Commentary : Verses ۸۰-۸۲

The Qur'ān, here, points to one of the false statements of the Jews of which they were proud and that very pride was the origin of part of their deviation. Thus the Qur'ān responds to it:

" And they said: ` The Fire shall not touch us but for a few days '..."

" ... Say: ` Have you taken such a promise from Allah, for He never fails in His promise? Or do you speak against Allah what you do not know?' "

One of the most obvious reasons for the stubbornness and egoism of this group is their belief in the ` preference of the Jewish race over all other races, and that they are different from other nations, and that their sinners will have to tolerate the Fire only for a few days as their punishment and, therefore, Paradise will be theirs exclusively forever '.

This claim of privileges is not logical in any aspect, because, before Allah, there is no difference between the members of the human race from the point of rewards or .punishments for their deeds

Can they support the expectation to their claim of being exceptional among nations and therefore receiving special treatment regarding the general law of penalties by ? describing something they have done to deserve it

However, the above verse with a logical statement, refuses their vain imaginations and denotes that their claims depict one of these two conditions : they should either have taken a particular promise from Allah on the matter that they have not or, they .tell lies and calumniate against Him

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The next verse expresses a common and universal law which is logical from any point :of view. It says

Yea! whoever earns evil and is encompassed by his sins, these are the inhabitants of " ".the Fire, therein shall they abide forever

This is a general rule for the sinners belonging to any sect, nation, in any locality, and .at any time

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There is also a universal, general law for the pious believers, which the next verse : announces

And those who have Faith and do deeds of righteousness they are the inhabitants of " ".Paradise, therein shall they abide forever

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: Explanation

Earning Sin

The Arabic term /kasb/ and /'iktisāb/ both mean: ` to earn or gain something willingly .' and consciously

Earnings are received in return for something done to profit one's self. This is quite different from merely falling into evil. It is to selfishly seek one's own gain that is evil. One sin leads to another sin

p:۲۲۰

and thus the conscience of the individual gradually becomes deadened until sinning becomes natural and normal for that person and he is totally abandoned to evil and attempts to justify his actions and to deny that he deserves eternal punishment. The law of cause and effect works in its natural order in the case of evil as in the case of virtue. Those who devote themselves wholly to evil, must naturally find themselves beset on every side by the consequent evil effects of the causative evil factors wrought by the individual. But those who struggle against evil, however long it may take for them to overcome it, the inclination towards the evil, cannot be considered equivalent to those who are out to earn evil. Those who struggle to overcome evil hate and detest it and the individual's earnest and sincere effort to overcome evil, naturally ends in the triumph of good in the human nature. With this endeavour of good against evil, the natural consequence of the struggle strengthens the nobility in the individual's personality. But, purposefully yeilding to evil with a selfish motive for any selfish gains, gradually erects a fortress of evil for the individual so that the access of good becomes more and more difficult and ultimately renders the individual's approach to any goodness as impossible. As the individual is totally lost, for all times, to evil, he convicts himself to the perpetual consequences of the evil all .around him for ever

: These kind of people are those who are referred to, later, in Sura ۲:۸۶ which says

Those are they who have bought the life of this world at the price of the Hereafter, " ".for them the punishment shall not be lightened, nor shall they be helped

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Verses ۸۳–۸۶; Arabic

۸۳ وَاِذْ اَخَذْنا میثاقَ بَنی اِسْرائـِلَ لا تَعْبُدُونَ اِلَّا اللّهَ وَ بِالْوالِدَیْنِ اِحْسانًا وَ ذِی الْقُرْبی وَ الْیَتامی وَالْمَساكینِ وَ قُولُوا لِلنّاسِ حُسْنًا وَ اَقیمُوا الصَّلوهَ وَ اتُوا الزَّكوهَ ثُمَّ تَوَلَّیْتُمْ اِلاّ قَلیلاً مِنْكُمْ وَ اَنْتُمْ مُعْرِضُونَ

۸۴ وَاِذْ اَخَذْنا میثاقَكُمْ لا تَسْفِكُونَ دِماءَكُمْ وَلا تُخْرِجُونَ اَنْفُسَكُمْ مِنْ دِیارِكُمْ ثُمَّ اَقْرَرْتُمْ وَ اَنْتُمْ تَشْهَدُونَ

۸۵ ثُمَّ اَنْتُمْ هؤُلاءِ تَقْتُلُونَ اَنْفُسَكُمْ وَ تُخْرِجُونَ فَریقـًا مِنْكُمْ مِنْ دِیارِهِمْ تَظاهَرُونَ عَلَیْهِمْ بِالاِْثْمِ وَالْعُدْوانِ وَ اِنْ یَأْتُوكُمْ اُسارى تُفادُوهُمْ وَ هُوَ مُحَرَّمٌ عَلَیْكُمْ اِخْراجُهُمْ

اَفَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِبَعْضِ الْكِتابِ وَ تَكْفُرُونَ بِبَعْضٍ فَما جَزاءُ مَنْ یَفْعَلُ ذلِكَ مِنْكُمْ اِلاّ خِزْیٌ فِی الْحَیوهِ الدُّنْیا وَ یَوْمَ الْقِیمَهِ یُرَدُّونَ اِلی اَشَدِّ الْعَذابِ وَ مَا اللّهُ بِغافِلٍ عَمّا تَعْمَلُونَ

۸۶ اُولـئِكَ الَّذینَ اشْتَرَوُا الْحَیوهَ الدُّنْیا بِالاْخِرَهِ فَلا یُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمُ الْعَذابُ وَلاهُمْ یُنْصَرُونَ

English Translation

Sura Al-Baqarah

(The Cow)

(No. ۲ (Verses ۸۳-۸۶

And (remember) when We made a covenant with the Children of Israel " ۸۳.
(instructing): ` You shall not worship any but Allah; and (you shall do) good to (your) parents, and to the near of kin and to the orphans, and the needy, and speak kind .' (words to people, keep up the prayer, and pay the poor-rates (zakāt

".(Then you turned away, except a few of you, and you backslide (even now

:And (remember) when We made a covenant with you " ۸۴.

You shall not shed your blood, nor expel one another from your dwellings ', then you ` ".confirmed it while you bore witness

Yet you kill one another and expel a group of your people from their dwellings, " ۸۵.
helping others against them in sin and enmity, and if they come to you as captives, .you ransom them yet their very expulsion was forbidden for you

? Do you then believe in part of the Book, and disbelieve in (another) part

What shall be the recompense of those of you who do that, but disgrace, in the life of this world, and on the Day of Resurrection to be consigned to the most terrible ".punishment ? And Allah is not heedless of what you do

Those are they who have bought the life of this world at the price of the " ۸۶.
".Hereafter, for them the punishment shall not be lightened, nor shall they be helped

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Commentary : Verses ۸۳–۸۶

! The Breachers of the Covenant

In a few of the verses mentioned before, the covenant of the Children of Israel was .hinted at, but no details were given about it

Through the verses under discussion, Allah reminds them of some of the items of this covenant. Most of these items or all of them should be counted as the fundamental principles and permanent laws of the Divine religions, because this same covenant and these instructions, in some form or other, are comprehensively found in every .religion

In these verses, the Qur'ān severely scorns and blames the Jews because they broke their covenant, and threatens them with disgrace in the life of this world and the most .grievous punishment in the Hereafter

This covenant, that the Children of Israel were witnesses of and confessed to, :contains the following items

:Monotheism and worshipping Allah, as the verse says .۱

And (remember) when We made a covenant with the Children of Israel "

"... ;instructing): ` You shall not worship any but Allah)

"... ,and (you shall do) good to (your) parents ..." .۲

"... ,and to the near of kin and to the orphans, and the needy ..." .۳

"...,and speak kind words to people ..." .۴

"...,keep up the prayer ..." .۵

"...'.(and pay the poor-rates (zakāt ..." .۶

Then you turned away, except a few of you, and you ..."

".(backslide (even now

****

:And (remember) when We made a covenant with you " .۷

"...,You shall not shed your blood `

"... ,'nor expel one another from your dwellings ..." .۸

".then you confirmed it while you bore witness ..." .۹

: This item of the covenant is perceived from the sentence)

("?Do you then believe in part of the Book, and disbelieve in (another) part "

****

.But you disregarded many of these aspects of your covenant with Allah

"... ,Yet you kill one another and expel a group of your people from their dwellings "

"... ,helping others against them in sin and enmity ..."

.All of these deeds you did are a breach of the covenant you had taken with Allah

"... and if they come to you as captives, you ransom them ..."

"... .yet their very expulsion was forbidden for you ..."

It is surprising that you, in paying ransom, and setting your captives free, comply with :the ordinances of the Turah and the Divine Covenant

"...? Do you then believe in part of the Book, and disbelieve in (another) part ..."

What shall be the recompense of those of you who do that, but disgrace, in the life ..." "... ,of this world

and on the Day of Resurrection to be consigned to the most terrible punishment ..." "...?

".And Allah is not heedless of what you do ..."

Then, He, the Just, will take all of them into account and will judge upon you according .to your deeds in the Divine Court of Justice

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The last of the verses under discussion, in fact, states their main motive for doing : these contradictory actions. It says

,Those are they who have bought the life of this world at the price of the Hereafter " "...

For this reason : "... for them the punishment shall not be lightened, nor shall they be ".helped

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Explanation

The Best Strategy for the Survival of Nations

These verses have been revealed about the Children of Israel, but they contain a series of universal laws for the whole human race throughout the world. These laws consist of some advice for those nations who wish to survive and to exist successfully, .as well as the secrets of failure and destruction

From the view point of the Qur'ān, nations will be happy and able to continue living when the individuals of that nation, avoiding sins, attach themselves to the greatest Power and rely on that Everlasting Source for help in all conditions. It is obvious that this Origin can be none but Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, they should obey Allah and bow only to Him, i.e. being sincere unto Him alone in obedience. If nations follow this law, they will be afraid of none. Genuine sincerity and perfect intentions of a believer in the way of Allah, do not tolerate the yielding of himself, in any regard, to anything or anybody else other than the One and Only True God, Allah. For it will mean the individual's surrender to his self which is nothing more than surrender to Satan which .is the equivalent of worshipping him

As it was already pointed out, the means of salvation, i.e. for a nation to survive and endure successfully, is firm adherence of its members to the Divine Covenant and their faithful and loyal attachment to the divinely commissioned guides. It is obvious that misdeeds or sins weaken faith, adherence, and the love of goodness, and the excess of it may result in the total severance of the Holy connection, and in the individuals becoming totally lost in the darkness of infidelity, hence eternal punishment and no salvation in either this world or the coming world will be the result .for such a nation

These verses of the Holy Qur'ān, if studied properly and judged dispassionately almost suffice to illustrate what is meant by the religion Islam and what kind of life Islam invites its believers, or all nations to live. And if the members of nations act upon these commandments, how peaceful, pleasant, and enjoyable will be the life here on .earth

These are on one side, but on the other side, the secret of the

p:۲۲۶

failure and defeat of nations, which finally leads to their destruction and abolishment, lies in the existence of hate and enmity between them and between the members inside each nation, i.e. being heedless to the above mentioned commandments. Such a nation will soon perish because of disregarding Allah's covenant by not relying on Him, by not respecting and helping their parents, family members, kindreds, neighbours, and all fellow men, by shedding blood and by not observing the rights of others by expelling them out of their houses or lands in order to occupy their :properties

"... ,You shall not shed your blood, nor expel one another from your dwellings ..."

And, finally, one of the factors of the destruction of nations is unjust discrimination in the execution of laws, i.e. when they observe those laws which protect their personal .profits but neglect what is beneficial for the society

"... ?Do you then believe in part of the Book, and disbelieve in (another) part ..."

And these are some of the causes of either the development or failure of nations from .the view point of the Qur'ān

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۸۷ وَ لَقَدْ اتَيْنا مُوسَى الْكِتابَ وَ قَفَّيْنا مِنْ بَعْدِه بِالرُّسُلِ وَ اتَيْنا عيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ الْبَيِّناتِ وَ اَيَّدْناهُ بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ اَفَكُلَّما جاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ بِما لا تَهْوى اَنْفُسُكُمُ اسْتَكْبَرْتُمْ فَفَريقًا كَذَّبْتُمْ وَ فَريقًا تَقْتُلُونَ

۸۸ وَ قالُوا قُلُوبُنا غُلْفٌ بَلْ لَعَنَهُمُ اللّهُ بِكُفْرِهِمْ فَقَليلاً ما يُؤْمِنُونَ

۸۷. "And We gave Moses the Book, and after him sent Messengers in succession; and We gave Jesus, son of Mary, clear Signs, and confirmed him with the Holy Spirit. Is it that whensoever (thereafter) there came to you a Messenger, with what your selves desire not, you became arrogant? Some you denied, and others you slay."

۸۸. "And they said: ` Our hearts are covered '. Nay! Allah has cursed them for their disbelief. Little is that which they believe."

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Commentary : Verses ۸۷–۸۸

Their Covered Hearts

In these verses, again, the Children of Israel are addressed. Yet the concepts and criteria mentioned in them are universal and apply to all.

At first, it says: " And We gave Moses the Book,..."

"... and after him sent Messengers in succession; ..."

There came Messengers such as David, Solomon, Joshua, Zacharia and John.

"... and We gave Jesus, son of Mary, clear Signs, and confirmed him with the Holy Spirit. ..."

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Is it that whensoever (thereafter) there came to you a Messenger, with what your…"
"… ? selves desire not, you became arrogant

:This domination of desire on you was so intense that from among those prophets

".Some you denied, and others you slay …"

This verse makes a fact clear that the Divine apostles, when communicating their prophecies, on the path of Allah, were heedless of the oppositions of the materialists. And, it must be so, because a correct sincere leadership is not anything save that. If prophets tend to follow the unconditioned desires of people and adapt themselves to people's selfish inclinations, they will be the followers of ` the misled ' rather than .being a divine leader for the followers of the path of truth

" …'.And they said: ` Our hearts are covered "

"… .Nay! Allah has cursed them for their disbelief …"

".And it is for the same reason that: "… Little is that which they believe

The above sentence may be about the Jews who either rejected the prophets (p.b.u.h.) or killed them. It is also probable that it refers to the Jews who were comtemporary with the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) and used to inflexibly oppose him with obstinacy and enmity. However, it states the fact that Man, following his desires, may reach a point that he be cursed by Allah and be deprived of His Mercy. It is in this case that his heart is enclosed in a covering so tight that the truth can rarely penetrate into .it

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۸۹ وَلَمّا جآءَهُمْ كِتابٌ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللّهِ مُصَدِّقٌ لِما مَعَهُمْ وَ كانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ يَسْتَفْتِحُونَ عَلَى الَّذينَ كَفَرُوا فَلَمّا جاءَهُمْ ما عَرَفُوا كَفَرُوا بِه فَلَعْنَةُ اللّهِ عَلَى الْكافِرينَ

۹۰ بِئْسَمَا اشْتَرَوْا بِه اَنْفُسَهُمْ اَنْ يَكْفُرُوا بِما اَنْزَلَ اللّهُ بَغْيًا اَنْ يُنَزِّلَ اللّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِه عَلى مَنْ يَشاءُ مِنْ عِبادِه فَباؤُ بِغَضَبٍ عَلى غَضَبٍ وَ لِلْكافِرينَ عَذابٌ مُهينٌ

۸۹. " When there came to them a Book from Allah, confirming what was with them and, from before, they had been praying for victory over those who rejected the Truth when there came to them that which they recognized (to be Truth), they disbelieved in it. So Allah's curse is on the disbelievers. "

۹۰. " Evil is the thing they have sold themselves for, denying in what Allah has sent down, out of envy that Allah should send down of His grace on whomever He wills of His servants, and they have incurred Wrath upon Wrath, and for the disbelievers awaits a humiliating punishment. "

Commentary: Verses ۸۹-۹۰

A Religious Adherent and an Infidel!

The words in these verses are again about the Jews and their lives. They formerly had an ardent love and were desirous for the advent of Islam and Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) for which they had settled in Medina waiting to see the signs of the new Prophet (p.b.u.h.) about which they had studied in their heavenly Book, the Turah.

From before, they usually gave each other the happy tidings of the advent of such a

Prophet (p.b.u.h.) and they hoped that his appearance would help them to be able to defeat their enemies. But when they received a Book from Allah, the Qur'ān, which contained the same message that the Jews had had with them, in the Turah, they .rejected it

When there came to them a Book from Allah, confirming what was with them and, " from before, they had been praying for victory over those who rejected the Truth when there came to them that which they recognized (to be Truth), they disbelieved "... .in it

".So Allah's curse is on the disbelievers ..."

Yet, it sometimes happens that a person eagerly pursues a certain fact, but when he reaches it and finds it opposite to his personal interests, he, being affected by his low .desires, refuses it and abandons it, or even sometimes he stands against it

In fact, the Jews have willingly acquired defeat. Those people who, with the purpose of accepting and following the promised Prophet (p.b.u.h.) had emigrated from their own homes and, with many difficulties, had settled in Medina in order to attain their goal, ultimately joined the camp of the pagans and hostile disbelievers. Therefore, the :Qur'ān says

"...,Evil is the thing they have sold themselves for "

denying what Allah has sent down, out of envy that Allah should send down of His ..." "... ,grace on whomever He wills of His servants

It seemed they expected that the promised prophet (p.b.u.h.) would be one from among the Children of Israel. They were displeased of the Qur'ān having been sent down to someone else. Then they, surrendering themselves to infidelity and disbelief in the Truth, showed their envy to the holy Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.). Therefore, :at the end of the verse, it says

and they have incurred Wrath upon Wrath, and for the disbelievers awaits a ..." ".humiliating punishment

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Verses ۹۱–۹۳

۹۱ وَ اِذا قيـلَ لَهُمْ امِنُوا بِمـا اَنْزَلَ اللّهُ قـالُوا نُؤْمِنُ بِمـا اُنْزِلَ عَلَيْنـا وَ يَكْفُـرُونَ بِما وَراءَهُ وَ هُوَ الْحَـقُّ مُصَـدِّقـًا لِما مَعَهُمْ قُلْ فَلِمَ
تَقْتُلُونَ اَنْبِياءَ اللّهِ مِنْ قَبْلُ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنينَ

۹۲ وَ لَقَدْ جاءَكُمْ مُوسى بِالْبَيِّناتِ ثُمَّ اتَّخَذْتُمُ الْعِجْلَ مِنْ بَعْدِه وَ اَنْتُمْ ظالِمُونَ

۹۳ وَ اِذْ اَخَـذْنا ميثـاقَكُمْ وَ رَفَعْنـا فَوْقَكُمُ الطُّورَ خُـذُوا مـا اتَيْنـاكُمْ بِقُوَّةٍ وَاسْـمَعُوا قالُوا سَـمِعْنا وَ عَصَـيْنا وَ اُشْـرِبُوا فى قُلُوبِهِمُ الْعِجْلَ
بِكُفْرِهِمْ قُلْ بِئْسَما يَأْمُرُكُـمْ بِـه ايمانُكُـمْ اِنْ كُنْـتُـمْ مُـؤْمِنى‌ـنَ

۹۱. " When it is said to them: ` Believe in what Allah has sent down ',

they said: ` We believe (only) in what was sent down to us (before) '.

But they disbelieve in what is beyond that, while it is the Truth confirming what is with them. Say:

` Why then were you slaying the Prophets of Allah in former times, if you were (indeed) faithful? ' "

۹۲. " And, also, Moses came to you with clear signs; yet you took to worship of the Calf after him (in his absence) and you were (willful) wrongdoers. "

۹۳. " And (remember) when We made a covenant with you, and raised the Mount, above you, (saying):

` Hold you fast that which We have given you with the strength, and hear (Our commandments) '. They said:

` We hear and disobey '; and they were made to imbibe (the love of) the Calf into their hearts because of their disbelief.

Say: ` Evil is what your faith bids you if you be, indeed, faithful '. "

Commentary: Verses ۹۱–۹۳

Racial Bigotries of the Jews

In commenting on the previous verses, it was said that the Jews tolerated a lot of trouble and toil on the path of reaching the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) that the Turah had promised, but when he (p.b.u.h.) came, they did not believe in him, because of envy, or for the reason that this prophet (p.b.u.h.) was not from the Children of Israel, or .because their personal interests were in danger

Now, through the verses under discussion, the Qur'ān refers to the racial bigotries of :the Jews by which they are known throughout the world. It says

When it is said to them:` Believe in what Allah has sent down ', they said:` We " believe (only) in what was sent down to us (before) '. But they disbelieve in what is "... ,beyond that

The Jews believed neither in the Evangel (Ingīl) nor in the Qur'ān, but they paid .attention only to the racial aspects and their personal benefits

The Jews said that they believed in what had been revealed to them, i.e. to the Israeli prophets (a.s.) and they would not believe in anything revealed to a non-Israeli prophet (i.e. the holy Prophet Mohammad (p.b.u.h.)). The reply to this arrogance is given in this verse saying that that which has been sent down to the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) is truth verifying that which is in the Book with them, referring to the :prophecy proclaimed in Duet. ۱۸: ۱۵-۱۸. And, now, the Qur'ān says

"... .while it is the Truth confirming what is with them ..."

Then, the Holy Qur'ān uncovers their falsehood and says that their excuse for their : disbelief is that Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) is not from among them

Say: ` Why then were you slaying the Prophets of Allah in former times, if you were... " " ' ? (indeed) faithful

If they truly believed in the Turah, the Divine Book in which murder is considered a

.major sin, they would not slay the great prophets of Allah

Furthermore, this statement that they say: " We believe (only) in

what was sent down to us (before) ", is a clear deviation from the path of Monotheism, or, in other words, it is, in itself, blasphemy. This is a kind of arrogance .and selfishness whether it be in the form of a personal issue or racial one

The purpose of Monotheism is to eradicate these disgraceful habits from the unity of human beings so that they accept Allah's commandments merely because they are .issued from that Origin

In other words, if the acceptance of the Divine instructions is only on the condition that they be sent down to us, it is, in fact, ` disbelief ' rather than ` belief ', or it is infidelity rather than ` faithfulness ' in Islam. The acceptance of such instructions is .not at all true evidence of Faith

It is worthy to note that when the above verse says: " When it is said to them: ` Believe in what Allah has sent down,'... " it refers neither to Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) nor :to Moses (a.s.) nor to Jesus (a.s.). It merely says

".Believe in what Allah has sent down "

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To make their falsehood clearer, in the next verse, the Quraān provides further :evidence against them. It says

And, also, Moses came to you with clear signs; yet you took to worship of the Calf " " .after him (in his absence) and you were (willful) wrongdoers

The Qur'ān tells the Jews that if you are true and you believe in your prophet, why did you worship the Calf after those clear signs and that monotheistic evidence ? What kind of faith is it that when Moses (a.s.) goes to the Mount, in his absence, it escapes from your hearts and immediately infidelity is substituted therein; or the Calf takes ? the place of Monotheism

Yes, with this wrong action, you committed an injustice both to yourselves and your .society, and to your coming generations

****

In the subsequent verse, the Holy Qur'ān cites another example

proving the meagreness of their claim. It refers to the covenant of Mount Sinai and :says

And (remember) when We made a covenant with you, and raised the Mount, above " :(you, (saying

Hold you fast that which We have given you with the strength, and hear (Our ` :commandments) '. They said

"... ;' We hear and disobey `

and they were made to imbibe (the love of) the Calf into their hearts because of ..." "... .their disbelief

Yes, blasphemy and mammonism, whose symbol was the love of the golden Samaritan Calf, had influenced their hearts and took root throughout their souls. That .was why they forgot their Lord

Strange! What sort of Faith is it that condones both the slaying of prophets and the ? worshipping of the Calf, but neglects the observance of firm Divine Covenants

".' Yes, "... Say: ` Evil is what your faith bids you if you be, indeed, faithful

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Verses ۹۴-۱۰۱; Arabic

۹۴ قُلْ اِنْ كانَتْ لَكُمُ الدّارُ الْاخِرَةُ عِنْدَاللّهِ خالِصَةً مِنْ دُونِ النّاسِ فَتَمَنَّوُا الْمَوْتَ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صادِقِينَ

۹۵ وَلَنْ يَتَمَنَّوْهُ اَبَداً بِما قَدَّمَتْ اَيْديهِمْ وَاللّهُ عَليمٌ بِالظّالِمينَ

۹۶ وَلَتَجِدَنَّهُمْ اَحْرَصَ النّاسِ عَلى حَيوةٍ وَ مِنَ الَّذينَ اَشْرَكُوا يَوَدُّ اَحَدُهُمْ لَوْ يُعَمَّرُ اَلْفَ سَنَةٍ وَ ما هُوَ بِمُزَحْزِحِه مِنَ الْعَذابِ اَنْ يُعَمَّرَ وَاللّهُ بَصيرٌ بِما يَعْمَلُونَ

۹۷ قُلْ مَنْ كانَ عَدُوّاً لِجِبْريلَ فَاِنَّهُ نَزَّلَهُ عَلى قَلْبِكَ بِاِذْنِ اللّهِ مُصَدِّقًا لِما بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَ هُدىً وَ بُشْرى لِلْمُؤْمِنينَ

۹۸ مَنْ كانَ عَدُوّاً لِلّهِ وَ مَلئِكَتِه وَ رُسُلِه وَ جِبْريلَ وَ ميكائيلَ فَاِنَّ اللّهَ عَدُوٌّ لِلْكافِرينَ

۹۹ وَ لَقَدْ اَنْزَلْنا اِلَيْكَ اياتٍ بَيِّناتٍ وَ ما يَكْفُرُ بِها اِلَّا الْفاسِقُونَ

۱۰۰ اَوَكُلَّما عاهَدُوا عَهْداً نَبَذَهُ فَريقٌ مِنْهُمْ بَلْ اَكْثَرُهُمْ لا يُؤْمِنُونَ

۱۰۱ وَ لَمّا جاءَهُمْ رَسُولٌ مِنْ عِنْدِاللّهِ مُصَدِّقٌ لِما مَعَهُمْ نَبَذَ فَريقٌ مِنَ الَّذينَ اُوتُوا الْكِتابَ كِتابَ اللّهِ وَراءَ ظُهُورِهِمْ كَاَنَّهُمْ لا يَعْلَمُونَ

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English Translation

Sura Al-Baqarah

(The Cow)

(No. ٢ (Verses ٩٤-١٠١

Say: ` If the Last Abode with Allah is yours exclusively and not for other people, " .٩٤
" .' then long for death if you are truthful

But never will they long for death, because of what their hands have sent forth; " .٩٥
" .for Allah well knows the unjust

Indeed, you will find them the greediest of people for life, even more than those " .٩٦
who associate partners (to Allah); each one of them is covetous to live (even) a
thousand years, yet the prolongation of his life shall not remove him further away
" .from the punishment. Allah sees what they do

Say (O' Muhammad): ` Whoever is an enemy to Gabriel, who brought down (the " .٩٧
Qur'ān) upon your heart by Allah's leave, confirming what was before it, and a
" ; ' guidance and glad tidings for the believers

And whoever is an enemy to Allah, His angels, His Messengers, Gabriel and " .٩٨
" .Michael (should know that) Allah is surely an enemy to the infidels

Verily, We have sent down to you clear Signs, and none denies them except the " .٩٩
" .transgressors

What! Whenever they made a covenant, a group of them cast it aside ? Nay, " .١٠٠
" .most of them do not (truly) believe

And when there came to them a Messenger from Allah, confirming what was " .١٠١
with them, a part of them who were given the Book cast the Book of Allah behind their
" !backs, as though they knew (it) not

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Commentary : Verses ۹۴– ۱۰۱

The Jew's Claim on Heaven

"... ,Say: ` If the Last Abode with Allah is yours exclusively and not for other people "

From the former verses, it was understood that the Jews claimed that they would not be touched by the Fire but for a few days when they worshipped the Calf, saying: " The Fire shall not touch us but for a few days ". Also, when they were told to believe in Allah's revelation, they replied that they would believe only in their Book, the Turah: " We believe (only) in what was sent down to us (before). " They imagined that they were the only people who would be qualified for salvation and felicity, while other nations would be punished and receive eternal destruction in the Hereafter. Then, to cancel this kind of idea and to verify that the case is not as they considered, it is told :them

".' then long for death if you are truthful ..."

The Messenger of Allah is commanded to tell them that if the abode of the Hereafter and the blessings of Heaven are exclusively theirs, they must strive to reach such bliss and invoke for death in order to get rid of the disasters and miseries of this world. It is in this situation that they would attain eternal happiness which they falsely think .belongs to them alone

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Allah Challenges the Jews' Claim

" ... ;But never will they long for death, because of what their hands have sent forth "

".for Allah well knows the unjust ..."

:And in another occurrence, as a protest to them, the Qur'ān says

If you think that you are friends to Allah, to the exclusion of (other) men, then ..." .(invoke your desire for death if you are truthful! ", (Sura Al-Jumu`ah, No. ۶۲, verse ۶

Yes, a sincere friend desires to be with his friend, someone in love wishes to see one's love, and a seeker of a particular thing is anxious and desirous to obtain that which .one is seeking

Worldly affairs and materialism often stand as a curtain or barrier between Allah and His servants. They usually do not let one approach Him and be acquainted with his / ,her Creator deservingly. Therefore

p:۲۳۸

the true sincerity towards Him is the desire of death. Then, here, to unvail the falsehood of the statement of the Jews, Allah announces that if they truly believe that the future abode with Allah is exclusively theirs and think that only they are those who are the favoured people of Allah, not any other people, they must invoke death with .their tongues, hearts, and actions to reach Him without any natural barrier

Indeed, you will find them the greediest of people for life, even more than those who " "...;(associate partners (to Allah

But they never invoke death because they are the greediest of all people for the life of this world. They love the long life of this world even much more than pagans and .idolators

"... ,each one of them is covetous to live (even) a thousand years ..."

Besides their hideous deeds and that they do not seek death in order to meet the .Lord, each of them would like to live one thousand years

The figure ` one thousand years ' metaphorically refers to the idea that they wish to live a long life. This is evidence to their lie and they know that neither the Last Abode with Allah is theirs, nor are they the friends of Allah. They arrogantly state these things, based on bigotry, in order to tell the Muslims that both the Jews and their .ancestral religion are right, and Muslims are wrong and their religion is untrue

Then Allah, by this clear evidence, made their falsehood manifest by stating that the .friends of Allah are those who are desirous of death to attain their goal

yet the prolongation of his life shall not remove him further away from the ..." "... .punishment

" .Allah sees what they do ..."

That is, the Jews will never long for death, then how can they desire a long life when it does not save them from the punishment ? Yet, they are the greediest people for the low life of this world which can be a barrier obstructing entrance into the everlasting

felicity of the life in the coming world. Furthermore, the members of this group having belief in the Hereafter and the life after death, are greedier for the life of this world than pagans and blasphemers, who wrongly believe that Man will be destroyed and .perish after death

"... ,Say (O' Muhammad): ` Whoever is an enemy to Gabriel "

Occasion of Revelation

The commentators believe that as `Abdullah-ibn-Abbas cites, the occasion of :revelation of this verse was as follows

One of the scholars of the Jews by the name of Ibn-Ṣūriyā, with a group of Jewish people from Fadak, was attending the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) when he put forth some .questions to test his gift of prophecy

Thereby being convinced that Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) was a true prophet of Allah, he asked as to which of Allah's angels had conveyed the

.Divine messages to him, and he (p.b.u.h.) answered that Gabriel had

The Jew said he would not believe, as Gabriel was the enemy of his people and he is the angel of punishment, annoyance, displeasure, indignation, and execution; while Michael was not, and if Michael would have been the one who came down to the Prophet (p.b.u.h.), then they would believe in him (p.b.u.h.). So, Allah (s.w.t.) sent down this verse and told the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) to say that he who is the enemy of :Gabriel, is the enemy of the one

"... ,who brought down (the Qur'ān) upon your heart by Allah's leave ..."

" ; ' confirming what was before it, and a guidance and glad tidings for the believers ..."

Thus, the Qur'ān attests to the rightfulness of all the heavenly Books such as the Turah, the Evangil, Psalms of David, the Written Sheets (Scriptures), and what Allah .(.had sent to other prophets (a.s

The word /hudan/ ` a guidance ' here, may refer to the guidance of the Qur'ān for all of the believing members of the Jinn and humans. The guidance is apportioned to the believers perhaps for the reason that it is only the believers who are benefited by the .Qur'ān, so therefore, the glad tidings are given to them

****

Now, this verse reiterates the subject matter of the previous verse but with more :emphasis and accompanied with a threat. It says

And whoever is an enemy to Allah, His angels, His Messengers, Gabriel and Michael " " .(should know that) Allah is surely an enemy to the infidels

This statement is an indication to the meaning that these instances

p:۲۴۰

This statement is an indication to the meaning that these instances are not separable. The Essence of Allah, angels, all His Messengers, Gabriel and Michael or any other angels, from this point of view, are all the same and to have enmity with one of them .is, in fact, having enmity with the others

In other words, Allah's ordinances, which are helpful on the path to development of the human race, have been revealed from His Origin unto prophets (p.b.u.th.) by means of angels. And if there be any difference between their missions, it is a difference of the division of responsibilities, not a contrast in missions. They are all alongside the path of the same goal. So, being an enemy against one of them is .showing enmity against Allah

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Upon the occasion of revelation of verse ٩٩, there is a narration from Ibn-Abbas who said: " Ibn-Ṣūriyā, a Jewish scholar, told the Prophet (p.b.u.h.): ` O Muhammad, you have not brought anything for us that we understand it, and also the Lord has not sent a clear sign to you so that we follow you thereby '. Then, Allah sent down this verse (which was a frank vivid answer to that statement.(١

!None Denies Divine Signs Save the Transgressors

Through this verse, the Qur'ān points to the fact that Allah has given the Prophet of Islam (p.b.u.h.) enough evidence and sufficient

Signs all of which are so clear that nobody can deny them. Hence, those who deny them, indeed, have recognized the rightfulness of his invitation, but, because of their .special evil intentions, they oppose it

Verily, We have sent down to you clear Signs, and none denies them except the " ".transgressors

Contemplation over the verses of the Qur'ān makes the way clear for any pure-hearted truth-seeker. By reciting these verses, the reality and truthfulness of the invitation of the Prophet of Islam (p.b.u.h.), as well as the greatness of the Qur'ān, can

be understood. But, only those can understand this meaning that their hearts have not been darkened

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Majm-ul-Bayan, vol. ۱, p .۱۶۸ ۱ -۱

as a result of committing sin. Thus, it is not surprising that transgressors and those who have stained themselves with sins by disobeying the commands of Allah, never .believe in Islam

****

?What! Whenever they made a covenant, a group of them cast it aside "

" .Nay, most of them do not (truly) believe

With reference to the previous verses, this verse is also a protest against the Jews as to why some of these people neglect and breach their covenant that they make with Allah. They not only break their covenant but also have no faith at all. It may refer to this idea that if they believed in Allah and His prophets (a.s.), they would never break .their covenant or never fail in their promise

****

And when there came to them a Messenger from Allah, confirming what was with " " ... ,them

The purpose of the term ` Messenger ', here, may be the Last Prophet (p.b.u.h.), or it may refer to all those prophets (a.s.) who came after Moses (a.s.), because, according to the previous verses, the Qur'ān protests against the Jews for rejecting all of the great prophets after Moses (a.s.). These prophets (a.s.), with their Divine commissions, abrogated Moses' religion whereas, in the meantime, they confirmed the rightfulness of what the Jews had in their hands the Turah yet, some of them (the :Jews) put the Book of Allah behind their backs

,a part of them who were given the Book cast the Book of Allah behind their backs ..." "...

Some of the learned men of the Jews put the Book of Allah, the Turah, which attested to the prophethood of the Last Messenger of Allah, Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.), " behind their backs " and, by neglecting his specific description which was recorded in

:the Turah, they abandoned it totally

" ! as though they knew (it) not ..."

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Verses ۱۰۲–۱۰۳; Arabic

Sura Al-Baqarah

(The Cow)

(No. ۲ (Verses ۱۰۲ and ۱۰۳

۱۰۲ وَاتَّبَعُوا مـا تَتْلُوا الشَّيـاطينُ عَلى مُلْـكِ سُـلَيْمنَ وَ مـا كَفَرَ سُـلَيْمنُ وَلكِنَّ الشَّيـاطينَ كَفَرُوا يُعَلِّمُونَ النّـاسَ السِّحْرَ وَ ما اُنْزِلَ عَلَى
الْمَلَكَيْنِ بِبابِلَ هارُوتَ وَ مارُوتَ وَ ما يُعَلِّمانِ مِنْ اَحَـدٍ حَتّى يَقُولا اِنَّما نَحْنُ فِتْنَةٌ فَلا تَكْفُرْ فَيَتَعَلَّمُونَ مِنْهُما ما يُفَرِّقُونَ بِه بَيْنَ الْمَرْءِ وَ
زَوْجِه وَ مـا هُمْ بِضـارّينَ بِه مِنْ اَحَـدٍ اِلاّ بِـاِذْنِ اللّهِ وَ يَتَعَلَّمُونَ ما يَضُـرُّهُمْ وَلا يَنْفَعُهُمْ وَ لَقَـدْ عَلِمُوا لَمَنِ اشْتَربهُ ما لَهُ فِى الْاخِرَهِ مِنْ
خَلاقٍ وَ لَبِئْسَ ما شَرَوْا بِه اَنْفُسَهُمْ لَوْ كانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ

۱۰۳ وَلَوْ اَنَّهُمْ امَنُوا وَاتَّقَوْا لَمَثُوبَةٌ مِنْ عِنْدِاللّهِ خَيْرٌ لَوْ كانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ

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English Translation

Sura Al-Baqarah

(The Cow)

(No. ۲ (Verses ۱۰۲ and ۱۰۳

And they followed what the Shaitans chanted of sorcery in the reign of Solomon; " .۱۰۲ and Solomon disbelieved not, but the Shaitans disbelieved by teaching people sorcery; and that which was sent down to the two angels, Hārūt and Mārūt, in Babylon. Even though they (the two) never taught anyone without saying: ` We are .'only a trial for you, therefore do not disbelieve

So they learned from these two (magic spells) by which they might cause separation between a man and his wife, though they cannot hurt anyone (thereby) but by Allah's .leave

They learn what harms them and profits them not; and they surely knew that the buyers of it would have no share of happiness in the Hereafter. And vile was the price " !(for which they sold their own selves, had they but known (this

Yet, had they believed (in Allah), and guarded themselves (against evil) a reward " .۱۰۳ " !(from Allah would have been better, had they but known (this

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Commentary: Verses ۱۰۲–۱۰۳

Solomon (a.s.) and the Sorcerers in Babylon

Solomon Accused of Being a Sorcerer

It is understood from the Islamic literature that, at the time of Solomon (a.s.), some of his fellow countrymen used to practice the art of sorcery. Solomon (a.s.) ordered that their records and related materials be gathered and kept locked in a safe place. (Their preservation was, perhaps, for the purpose that there may have been some pieces of paper among them helpful for breaking the spells of the sorcerers' magic.)

After the departure of Solomon (a.s.), a group of people took them out and began spreading and teaching others sorcery. Some, taking advantage of this opportunity, said that Solomon (a.s.) was not a prophet at all, and the wonderful power that he had over the realms of nature was through witchcraft; so it was with the help of those magic tricks that he could dominate his country and do extraordinary things.

By following this group, some of the Israelites were severely engaged in the art of sorcery; so intensively that they put the Turah aside.

When the Prophet of Islam (p.b.u.h.) announced his invitation and, through the verses of the Qur'ān, proclaimed that Solomon (a.s.) had been one of the apostles of Allah, some of the Jewish rabbis told their people: ` Are you not surprised that Muhammad says Solomon was an apostle while he was a sorcerer ? '

This statement by those Jews was counted a great accusation against this Divine prophet (a.s.), because when they said he was a sorcerer it insinuated that he was a lier and not a true prophet. This action caused him to be considered a blasphemer. Then, the above verse responded to their false accusation.

However, the first verse of this group of verses illustrates another dimension of the hineous actions of the Jews : that they accused the apostle of Allah, Solomon (a.s.), of sorcery and witchcraft. It says:

" And they followed what the Shaitans chanted of sorcery in the reign of Solomon; ... "

The pronoun ` they ', existing in the Arabic word /wattaba`ū/, `they

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followed ', may refer to the Jews contemporary with the Prophet of Islam (p.b.u.h.) or .those contemporary with Solomon (a.s.) or all of them

The objective meaning of the term /šayātīn/ may be the evil people, or devils of the .Jinn, or both of them

:Then, after stating the above idea, the Qur'ān adds

"... ,and Solomon disbelieved not ..."

Solomon (a.s.) never did practice sorcery, and he did not take any advantage from it in :attaining his goals

"... ;but the Shaitans disbelieved by teaching people sorcery ..."

"... .and that which was sent down to the two angels, Hārūt and Mārūt, in Babylon ..."

: Yes, they stretched their hands toward sorcery from two sides

one, from the side of sorcery which was taught by the Shaitans during the time of Solomon (a.s.); and the other side was the instructions that Hārūt and Mārūt taught .people for the purpose of breaking the spells of sorcery

: Even though they (the two) never taught anyone without saying ..."

"... .' We are only a trial for you, therefore do not disbelieve `

The Story of the two Angels, Harut and Marut

In short, when these two angels appeared in the society, sorcery was in fashion among those people and a popular item in their marketplace. At that time, most of the people were captured in the grips of sorcerers. The two angels taught people the ways in which they could counter the effects of such wicked practices (the witchcraft) of the sorcerers as an art of self-defense. But learning this art demanded, firstly, that they learn about the magic itself. So, in order to be able to negate sorcery, they initially had to learn sorcery itself, and the ways in which it might work effectively, as .good skillful magicians

The spread of sorcery

But Jewish mischief mongers took this matter as a means for spreading sorcery more and more. They expanded it so vastly that they accused the Divine prophet, Solomon (a.s.), of sorcery and said that if nature, or even Jinns and humans, obeyed him (a.s.), it was merely the effect of sorcery. Yes, this is the common habit of the vicious: to accuse the great men as being their followers to justify their own school of thought.

At any rate, they could not pass this Divine trial successfully and,

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.consequently, failed in keeping the right path, the true Faith

So they learned from these two (magic spells) by which they might cause …" "… ,separation between a man and his wife

.But the Power of Allah is above all these abilities

"… .though they cannot hurt anyone (thereby) but by Allah's leave …"

"… ;They learn what harms them and profits them not …"

Yes, they altered this divine constructive training. Instead of utilizing it on the path of improving their society and using it as a means of defense against the witchcraft of .the sorcerers, they applied it to doing evil

and they surely knew that the buyers of it would have no share of happiness in the …" "… .Hereafter

And vile was the price for which they sold their own selves, had they but known …" " !((this

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Sorcery–A whirlpool of Blasphemy

They were heedless of their own happiness and of that of the society they belonged .to, and were drowned in the whirlpool of blasphemy

Yet, had they believed (in Allah), and guarded themselves (against evil) a reward " " !(from Allah would have been better, had they but known (this

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Verses ۱۰۴-۱۰۵

۱۰۴ یا اَیُّهَا الَّذینَ امَنُوا لا تَقُولُوا راعِنا وَ قُولُوا انْظُرْنا وَاسْمَعُوا وَ لِلْکافِرینَ عَذابٌ اَلیمٌ

۱۰۵ ما یَوَدُّ الَّذینَ کَفَرُوا مِنْ اَهْلِ الْکِتابِ وَ لاَ الْمُشْرِکینَ اَنْ یُنَزَّلَ عَلَیْکُمْ مِنْ خَیْرٍ مِنْ رَبِّکُمْ وَ اللّهُ یَخْتَصُّ بِرَحْمَتِهِ مَنْ یَشاءُ واللّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظیمِ

۱۰۴. " O' you who have Faith! Do not say (to the Prophet) ` rā`inā ' but say ` unẓurnā '; and hearken (unto him) and for unbelievers awaits a painful punishment. "

۱۰۵. " Neither those who reject Faith from among the people of the (earlier) Book, nor those who take partners to Allah, wish that any good should be sent down upon you from your Lord, and Allah chooses especially whom He pleases for His Mercy and Allah is the Lord of Mighty Grace. "

Occasion of Revelation:

Ibn Abbas, the leading commentator, is narrated to have said that the early Muslims, when the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) was speaking and teaching them the divine verses and commandments, often asked him to speak slowly so that they could comprehend the material well and could have opportunity enough to ask their questions. For this purpose, then, they applied the phrase /rā`inā/ derived from the root /ar-ra`ā/ ` to give respite ', which means: ` give us respite, wait for us '.(۱) But the Jews took the same word from the Arabic root /ar-ra`ūnah/ used with the meaning of ` foolhardiness, thoughtlessness, foolishness ', which means: ` make foolish of us ' and suggests an insult.(۲)

Here, the Jews had found something by which they could ridicule

۱- ۱ Aa-Durr-ul-Manthur, vol. ۱, pp. ۲۵۲-۲۵۳

۲- ۲ Jami-ul-Bayan, by Muhammad-ibn-Jarir Tabari, vol. ۱, pp.۴۶۹-۴۷۳

.and make fun of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) and the Muslims

The first verse of the above verses was revealed to prevent this derisive usage of the word by the Jews. It commanded the believers to use /unẓurnā/ instead of /rā`inā/ which had the same meaning, but was plain and unambiguous. Thus, the enemies .could not misuse it

Some other commentators have said that the phrase /ra`inā/ was employed by some Jews in whose language it had an uncomplimentary meaning. They repeated it again .and again

Some others of the commentators have also said that the Jews pronounced /rā`īnā/ instead of saying /rā`inā/ and, addressing the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) with that term which .meant ` our cattle-tender, shepherd ', ridiculed him

These occasions of revelation do not contrast with each other, so that all of them may .be right

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:Commentary

! Leave No Pretext for Enemies

Regarding what was said about the occasion of revelation, the first verse of the : verses under discussion says

"... ;' O' you who have Faith! Do not say (to the Prophet) ` rā'inā ' but say ` unẓurnā "

".and hearken (unto him), and for unbelievers awaits a painful punishment ..."

It is well understood from this verse that the Muslims, should be careful to avoid giving their enemies any pretext, because they may misuse even one short sentence against them. The Qur'ān advises the Muslims to avoid uttering even the smallest common word which they might transform into a term of reproach in order to weaken the spirits of the Muslims. They should be careful not to select words which have

multiple or ambiguous meanings that may be misused by the enemies to mock them thereby but rather should choose appropriate, unambiguous words. They must guard themselves against the cynical trick of using

.words which sound complimentary to the ear but have a hidden barb in them

When Islam is so meticulous that it does not let Muslims give their enemies pretext for these little things, the duty of Muslims is clear for greater and more important .subjects, both concerning their interior affairs and international matters

It is also noteworthy that the phrase /rā`inā/, besides what was stated before, is not free from impoliteness in meaning, because this term may also be derived from the word /murā`āt/, which means that `you should observe us and we will observe you likewise '. Then, the Qur'ān has bidden the Muslims not to use it anymore, since it .contains a sense of impoliteness, besides the abusing of it by the Jews

A Precise Meaning

The honorific and enlivening sentence /yā 'ayyuhallaīna 'āmanū/ ` O' you who have Faith ', addressed to the believers, has occurred ٨٠ times in the Qur'ān. The above .verse is the first one which contains this phrase

It is interesting that this phrase has occurred only in the verses that have been revealed in Medina, viz. it is not seen in the Meccan verses. It may be for the reason that with the emigration of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) to Medina, Muslims gathered together and it was then that the situation of Muslims became stabilized, especially when they formed a strong, powerful government. Hence, Allah (s.w.t.) addressed :them with this phrase

" !O' you who have Faith "

This phrase conveys another meaning, too. It indicates that now that you have Faith and have submitted to the truth, i.e. you have taken a covenant with Allah, you should obey Him according to the commandments that have come along with it. In other .words, your Faith necessitates that you follow these instructions accordingly

It is also notable that in many references of Islamic literature, including the ones of :the Sunnite, the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) is narrated to have said

No verse has Allah revealed with ` O' you who have Faith ' save that Ali is at its top " (and is its chief. "(1)

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The curtain on the enmity and grudge

In the next verse, the Qur'ān pulls back the curtain on the enmity and grudge of the pagans and the People of the Book towards the believers. It says:

Neither those who reject Faith from among the people of the (earlier) Book, nor " those who take partners to Allah, wish that any good should be sent down upon you "... ,from your Lord

:But this is not but a bare wish for them, because

"...and Allah chooses especially whom He pleases for His Mercy ..."

".and Allah is the Lord of Mighty Grace ..."

Because of their envy and enmity, the enemies of Islam did not want to be witnesses to this honour and glory given to Muslims, and they could not adapt to the fact that a great Prophet with a Divine Book from Allah could be appointed for them (Muslims). But, it was impossible for those hostile enemies to hinder the Mercy and Grace of .Allah

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Tafsir-i-Furat-ul-Kufi, p. ۴۹,Tradition ۷; and Taikh-i-Damishq, Ibn Asakir, vol. ۲, p. ۱ -۱ ۴۲۸

۱۰۶ ما نَنْسَخْ مِنْ ايَهٍ اَوْ نُنْسِها نَأْتِ بِخَيْرٍ مِنْها اَوْ مِثْلِها اَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ اَنَّ اللّهَ عَلى كُلِّ شَىْ ءٍ قَديرٌ

۱۰۷ اَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ اَنَّ اللّهَ لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمواتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَ ما لَكُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللّهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَ لا نَصيرٍ

۱۰۶. " Whatever We abrogate of a verse or cause it to be forgotten, We bring a better or the like of it. Do you not know that Allah has power over all things ? "

۱۰۷. " Do you not know that to Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth and that, besides Allah, you have neither guardian nor helper? "

Commentary: Verses ۱۰۶-۱۰۷

Purpose of Abrogation

The central meaning of these verses, is again the Jewish evil propaganda against the Muslims.

The Jews occasionally said that the true religion was the religion of the Jews and the real Qiblah was the direction that they used for their prayers. The evidence supporting their idea was that the Prophet of Islam (p.b.u.h.) used to pray toward their Qiblah (Jerusalem). But when the command for changing the Qiblah from Jerusalem to the Ka`bah came down and, according to verse ۱۴۴ from this very Sura, Muslims had to pray toward the direction of Mecca (Ka`bah), this pretext was taken away from the Jews. Therefore, they tried to assert a new pretext and said that if the first Qiblah was right, then what was the second instruction for ? And, if the second instruction was correct, then the Muslims' previous religious actions performed towards Jerusalem would be considered invalid.

The Qur'ān replies to their objections through these verses and, thereby, enlightens the hearts of the believers. It says:

Whatever We abrogate of a verse or cause it to be forgotten, We bring a better or " "... .the like of it

:And it is easy for Allah, of course

" ? Do you not know that Allah has power over all things ..."

"...Do you not know that to Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth "

Allah has the right to change His ordinances in any form He pleases and He is the .most knowledgable of all as to the welfare of His servants

" ? and that, besides Allah, you have neither guardian nor helper ..."

In fact, the first part of this verse denotes the absolute sovereignty of Allah in religious ordinances and that He is able to recognize and has the required knowledge to decide what is good for His creatures. Then, believers should not hearken to the vain words of some self-centered fellows who have doubt in the abrogations of the .Divine Ordinances

And the second part of the verse is a warning to those who choose refuge and .support in other than Allah, because there is no real support in the world save Allah

It should also be noted that the term /nasx/ ` abrogation ' in philology means: ` to abolish, destroy ', and from the point of view of religion it means: `to nullify a rule and substitute another in its place'. The detailed explanation about this subject will be .discussed later

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Verse: ۱۰۸

۱۰۸ اَمْ تُريدُونَ اَنْ تَسْئَلُوا رَسُولَكُمْ كَما سُئِلَ مُوسى مِنْ قَبْلُ وَ مَنْ يَتَبَدَّلِ الْكُفْرَ بِالْاْيمانِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ سَواءَ السَّبيلِ

۱۰۸. "Or do you desire to question your Messenger (Muhammad) as Moses was questioned aforetime ? And he who exchanges Faith for infidelity, he has surely strayed from the right way."

Occasion of Revelation:

In the commentary books you may find some apparently different occasions of revelation for this verse, but their conclusions are nearly the same. A few of them are as follows:

One of the occasions of revelation upon the above verse has been narrated by Ibn Abbas. It is stated that once Wahab-ibn-Zayd and Rāfi`-ibn-Ḥarmalah came to the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) and asked him to bring a letter from Allah for them to read and then they might believe. Or, it happened that he (p.b.u.h.) was asked to make some streams appear and flow for them so that they might follow him.

Some other commentators have said that a group of Arabs wanted from the Prophet of Islam (p.b.u.h.) the same things that the Jews wanted from Moses (a.s.). They asked him to show the Lord clearly so that they could see Him with their own eyes and then they would believe.

As a response to them for their demand, the above verse was revealed.

Commentary:

Some Futile Pretexts

The addressees, in this verse, are some Muslims whose Faith was feeble, or the pagans. The Jews are not mentioned directly in this verse but, as we will explain later, it is not far removed from the story of the Jews.

It was, perhaps, after the event of the change of the Qiblah that some of Muslims and pagans, affected by the temptations of the Jews, requested some vain and futile demands from the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.), the examples of which were cited in the above. Allah, the Almighty, forbade them to ask such questions. The Qur'ān says:

"Or do you desire to question your Messenger (Muhammad) as Moses was questioned aforetime ? …" But you have decided, indeed, to evade believing by the acceptance of these vain pretexts.

In view of the fact that this action is a way of exchanging Faith for blasphemy, at the end of the verse it adds:

"… And he who exchanges Faith for infidelity, he has surely strayed from the right way."

It should be noted that Islam has never prevented people from asking scientific or logical questions, as well as asking the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) to perform miracles in order to prove the Divine rightfulness of his prophecy, because the means of gaining understanding and Faith are the same. But there were some people who asked some futile questions and demanded some irrational pretexts in order to shirk the invitation of the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.).

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۱۰۹ وَدَّ کَثیرٌ مِنْ اَهْلِ الْکِتابِ لَوْ یَرُدُّونَکَمْ مِنْ بَعْـدِ ایمانِکَمْ کُفّاراً حَسَـداً مِـنْ عِنْـدِ اَنْفُسِهِـمْ مِـنْ بَعْـدِ ما تَبَیَّـنَ لَهُـمُ الْحَـقَّ
فَاعْفُوا وَاصْفَحُوا حَتّی یَأْتِـیَ اللّهُ بِاَمْـرِه اِنَّ اللّهَ عَلی کُلِّ شَیْ ءٍ قَدی-رٌ

۱۱۰ وَاَقیمُوا الصَّلوهَ وَ اتُوا الزَّکوهَ وَ ما تُقَدِّمُوا لِاَنْفُسِکُمْ مِنْ خَیْرٍ تَجِدُوهُ عِنْدَ اللّهِ اِنَّ اللّهَ بِما تَعْمَلُونَ بَصیرٌ

Many of the people of the (earlier) Book wish they could turn you back to be " .۱۰۹ infidels, after you have believed, out of their own envy, even after the truth was .manifest to them

Nevertheless) forgive and overlook till Allah brings about His command, truly Allah) ".has power over all things

And keep up the prayer, and pay the poor-rates; whatever good you shall " .۱۱۰ " .forward for yourselves, you shall find it with Allah; surely Allah sees what you do

Commentary: Verses ۱۰۹-۱۱۰

Envy and Obstinacy

There were many members of the People of the Book, especially those of the Jews, who not only disbelieved in Islam but they also urged the believers to abandon their .Faith. Their motive, for this action, was nothing but envy

:Through the above mentioned verses, the Qur'ān addresses this matter by saying

Many of the people of the (earlier) Book wish they could turn you back to be infidels, " after you have believed, out of their own envy, even after the truth was manifest to "... .them

Here, the Qur'ān bids the believers to forgive them their evil

:endeavours aiming at the destruction of Faith until Allah sends His command

Nevertheless) forgive and overlook till Allah brings about His command, truly Allah) ..."
".has power over all things

This is, in fact, a tactical instruction given to Muslims that they should stand firm before the intense pressure of the enemies; and in this particular circumstance utilize the weapon of forgiveness while they focus their abilities upon constructing .themselves and their Islamic society, and wait for the command of Allah

As a great many of the commentators have said, the purpose of ` the command of Allah ', here, is ` the command for the Holy War ' which at that time had not been revealed yet. The reason for the delay may have been that their conditions were not completely appropriate for that command. That was why, according to many of the commentators, the idea in this verse was changed by the subsequent verses .regarding ` the Holy War ', which will be referred to later

Prayer and Alms-giving

The verse following the above one bids the believers to perform two great constructive commands. One of them is about ` prayer ' which establishes a firm relationship between the servant and his Lord. The second is alms-giving which is the secret of cohensiveness among the members of societies. These two are necessary :for defeating enemies. It says

" ... ;And keep up the prayer, and pay the poor-rates "

.By these two deeds you may strengthen both your spirit and body

Then, it adds that you should not think that the good deeds you do and the material :wealth you pay as poor-rates in the way of Allah will be lost totally. It is not so, but

"... ;whatever good you shall forward for yourselves, you shall find it with Allah ..."

".surely Allah sees what you do ..."

Thus, He definitely knows which deeds you have done for His sake and which ones for .the sake of other than Him

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۱۱۱ وَ قالُوا لَنْ يَدْخُلَ الْجَنَّهَ اِلّا مَنْ كانَ هُوداً اَوْ نَصارى تِلْكَ اَمانِيُّهُمْ قُلْ هاتُوا بُرْهانَكُمْ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صادِقينَ

۱۱۲ بَلى مَنْ اَسْلَمَ وَجْهَهُ لِلّهِ وَ هُوَ مُحْسِنٌ فَلَهُ اَجْرُهُ عِنْدَ رَبِّه وَلا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلاهُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

۱۱۱. "And they said: ` None shall enter Paradise except one who is a Jew or a Christian.' Such are their fancies. Say: ` Bring your proof, if you are truthful.'"

۱۱۲. "Yes! Whoever submits himself entirely to Allah, and he is a doer of good, his reward is with his Lord; no fear shall be upon them, nor shall they grieve."

Commentary: Verses ۱۱۱–۱۱۲

Point

In the above verses, the Qur'ān has referred to one of the other vain, inappropriate statements of a group of the Jews and the Christians, and then, it has responded to them with a knockdown answer. It is as thus:

"And they said: ` None shall enter Paradise except one who is a Jew or a Christian.' ..."

In reply to them, at first, it says:

"... Such are their fancies. ...", and they will never reach such wishes. Then, addressing the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) it says:

"... Say: ` Bring your proof, if you are truthful.' "

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Every claim needs its own proof for verification. When the fact became clear that they had not any proof for their claim and that their insistence that Paradise was exclusively theirs, which was merely a bare desire of theirs, the essential basic criterion for entering Paradise was given, as a general law in this verse, as it says:

Yes! Whoever submits himself entirely to Allah, and he is a doer of good, his reward " "... ;is with his Lord

".Therefore, "...no fear shall be upon them, nor shall they grieve

In short, the fact is that entering Paradise, the reward of Allah, and attaining felicity and salvation in the coming eternal life is exclusive to no tribe or particular race, but :these merits belong to the ones who have the following two attributes

The first attribute is that the person should submit himself wholly to the commands of Allah, and obey all of His commandments without considering any difference between this ordinance or that one. It should not be so that he accepts those commandments that are compatible with what he considers his benefit and puts aside those that are .opposite to that which he desires. Yes, such ones are entirely submitted to Allah's Will

The second attribute is that the effect of Faith is illustrated in their deeds in the form .of good actions. These people are good to all human beings in all of their affairs

The Quran Nullifies Racial Bigotry

By this statement, in fact, the Qur'ān, as a general rule, nullifies the inappropriate racial bigotries, and absolutely dismisses true salvation and happiness from the confinement of a special tribe. To sum it up, the verse distinguishes Faith and good .deeds as criterion for true felicity

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Verse ۱۱۳

۱۱۳ وَ قالَتِ الْيَهُودُ لَيْسَتِ النَّصارى عَلى شَىْ ءٍ وَ قالَتِ النَّصارى لَيْسَتِ الْيَهُودُ عَلى شَىْ ءٍ وَ هُمْ يَتْلُونَ الْكِتابَ كَذلِكَ قالَ الَّذينَ لا يَعْلَمُونَ مِثْلَ قَوْلِهِمْ فَاللّهُ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيمَهِ فيما كانُوا فيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ

:The Jews said: ` The Christians rest on naught ', and the Christians said " .۱۱۳

The Jews rest on naught '; yet they (both) recite the (same) Book. Even so, similar to ` their sayings, spoke those who know not. Allah will judge between them on the Day of ".Judgement in what they differ

:Occasion of Revelation

Some of the commentators have narrated from Ibn Abbas that when a group of Christians who were from Najrān were attending a gathering of the Prophet's (p.b.u.h.), some of the Jewish scholars were there, too. These two groups began disputing with each other before the Prophet (p.b.u.h.). Rafi` -ibn-Ḥarmalah, one of the Jews, turned to the Christians and said that their religion was based on naught. .Thus, he was rejecting the prophethood of Jesus (a.s.) and his Divine Book

Then, a man from among the Christians from Najrān, too, replied to him with a similar expression and said that the religion of the Jews was based on naught. Thus, he also rejected both the prophethood of Moses (a.s.) and the Turah. It was at that time that the above verse was revealed and reproached both groups for their fabricated (statements.(۱

:Commentary

Exclusivity, the Fruit of Ignorance

In the previous verse, we became acquainted with a portion of the proofless claims of a group of the Jews and the Christians. The verse

Majm-ul-Bayan, vol. ۱, p. ۱۸۸, and Tafsir Ghartabi and Tafsir Almanar ۱ -۱

under discussion indicates that when a proofless claim comes forth, it results in .exclusivity and then leads to contradiction

:The Jews said: ` The Christians rest on naught ' , and Christians said "

"... ;' The Jews rest on naught `

The phrase: ` rest on naught ' may mean that they have no rank and honour with .Allah; or their belief is not a thing worthwhile

:Then, to complete the above idea, it adds

"... .yet they (both) recite the (same) Book..."

That is, with the Divine Book that they have in their hands which can guide them toward the right path concerning these problems, it is surprising that they say such .words which originate from nowhere except prejudice and enmity

:Then the Qur'ān continues saying

".Even so, similar to their sayings, spoke those who know not..."

(.Although these are the People of the Book and those are pagans or idolaters)

This verse introduces ignorance as the origin of bigotry and prejudice, because ignorant people are always shut in their own worlds and do not accept other than that which they know. They seriously believe only in the Faith that they have been acquainted with from their early childhood, even if it is false or superstitious. .Therefore, they put aside everything other than that which they believe

:At the end of the verse, it says

".Allah will judge between them on the Day of Judgement in what they differ..."

It is in the Hereafter where the facts will be entirely evident and the proof and references of all things will become perfectly manifest. None will be able to deny what is right and, thus, there will remain no dispute. Yes, one of the special characteristics

.of the Resurrection Day is that all disagreements will come to an end

By the way, the above verse reminds Muslims that although the followers of these religions have stood against them and rejected Islam, therefore, they need not be worried because the Jews and Christians do not verify even themselves. Each of them nullifies the other and, in principle, ignorance is the origin of bigotry and bigotry is the source of exclusivity.

Verse ۱۱۴

۱۱۴ وَ مَنْ اَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ مَنَعَ مَساجِدَ اللّهِ اَنْ يُذْكَرَ فيهَا اسْمُهُ وَ سَعى فى خَرابِها اُولئِكَ ما كانَ لَهُمْ اَنْ يَدْخُلُوها اِلاّ خائِفينَ لَهُمْ فِى الدُّنْيا خِزْىٌ وَ لَهُمْ فِى الْاخِرَهِ عَذابٌ عَظيمٌ

And who is more unjust than he who prevents the mosques of Allah of His Name " .۱۱۴ being remembered therein and strives for their ruin? Such (people) might never enter them, save in fear. For them is disgrace in this world, and in the Hereafter a great ".punishment

:Occasion of Revelation

It has been narrated from Ibn Abbas, cited in the book ` Asbāb-un-Nuzūl ', that this verse was revealed about Fatlus-ur-Rūmī, a Roman, and his friends. They fought against the Children of Israel and burnt the Turah. In that war, Jewish children were (made captives, and Jerusalem was ruined and filled with corpses.(۱

The Late Ṭabarsī, a great commentator, narrates from Ibn Abbas, in his book ` Majma`ul-Bayān ', that this strive for the destruction of Jerusalem was continued (until when that Holy Land was conquered by Muslims. ...(۲

A tradition from Imam Ṣādiq (a.s.) says that this verse was revealed about the Quraysh when they prevented the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) from entering Mecca and the (Ka`bah.(۳

Also, a third occasion of revelation is cited for this verse. It says the verse is referring to the sites in Mecca where Muslims used to pray at, which pagans destroyed totally after the emigration of the Prophet

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Asbab-un-Nuzul, p. ۲۲, Arabic version ۱ -۱

Majma`-ul-Bayān, vol. ۱, p. ۱۸۹ ۲ -۲

Ibid ۳ -۳

(p.b.u.h.) from that City.(1)

There is no discrepancy in saying that all three of these occasions of revelation refer to their own individual incidents. Therefore, each of them illustrates one of the dimensions of the subject.

Commentary:

The Most Unjust Ones!

When dealing with the occasions of revelation of the above mentioned verse, it is understood that the words are about all three groups: the Jews, the Christians and the pagans, while the words in the previous verses were mostly about the Jews and sometimes about the Christians.

At any rate, the Jews, creating mischief about the Qiblah, tried to return the direction of the prayers of Muslims toward Jerusalem in order to appear to have, by that manner, a kind of superiority in the eyes of the community of Muslims and also weaken the lustre and elegance of the Sacred Mosque and the Ka`bah.(2)

The pagans of Mecca, having prevented the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) and Muslims from visiting and pilgrimaging to the Sacred House, the Ka`bah, practically stepped forth toward the desolation of this Holy Structure.

The Christians, too, having conquered Jerusalem and having performed actions which gave rise to what was said to be the occasion of revelation of this verse, as narrated by Ibn Abbas, tried to ruin it.

The Qur'ān, warning these three groups and all others who pave a similar way, says:

"And who is more unjust than he who prevents the mosques of Allah of His Name being remembered therein and strives for their ruin? ..."

Thus, the Qur'ān considers this prevention unjust and introduces contrivers of it as 'the most unjust people'. Indeed, what greater ` unjust

.Maima-u-Bayan, Vol.۱, p. ۱۸۹ Almizan, the commentary of the verse ۱ -۱

Tatsir Fakhri-Razi, vol. ۴, p.۹ ۲ -۲

could be committed than that they strive to ruin the Monotheistic centers and prevent people from remembering the Name of their Providence, whose consequence would be the spread of polytheism and corruption in the society!

Then, the verse continues saying:

"... Such (people) might never enter them, save in fear ..."

That is, Muslims and monotheists of the world should stand so firm against these transgressors that their hands be curtailed from these sacred sites so that none of them can freely and without fear enter therein.

In commenting on the above verse, a possible meaning is that these kind of unjust people with these kind of actions will never truly succeed in taking these Holy shrines and places of worship under their own control. The final circumstance will be such that they will not be able to enter them save in fear. They will be subject to just the same fate and fortune that the pagans of Mecca had regarding the Sacred Mosque.

Finally, through the concluding words of the verse and with a shocking statement, the Qur'ān has referred to the penalty of those transgressors both in the present world and the coming world. It says:

"... For them is disgrace in this world, and in the Hereafter a great punishment."

And this is the end of those who want to separate servants from their Providence.

Explanation

Mosques and the Ways of their Desolation

There is no doubt that the above verse has a vast meaning which is not confined to a particular time or place. The verse, from this point of view, is like other verses of the Qur'ān which have been revealed in relation to a specific condition or circumstance referred to as the occasion of revelation, but their ordinances are valid in all ages. Therefore, anyone or any group who strive in any form to ruin the mosques of Allah, or prevent the Name of Allah from being

remembered and adored therein, will be faced with the same disgrace and great .punishment which have been pointed out in this verse

It is also necessary to pay attention to this fact that the prevention of worshippers from entering into the Sacred Mosque and the barring of the remembrance of the Name of Allah and His adoration along with striving for ruining it, does not only refer to the mosque being destroyed by shovel and pick, but involves any actions that .cause mosques to be ruined or seem dull and lustreless

As it will be explained when commenting on Sura Al-Taubah, No. ۹, verse ۱۸, the purpose of the Qur'ānic phrase /ya`muru masājid/, mentioned in the verse, according to the clear meanings of some Islamic narrations and traditions, is not merely ` to build or to mend the mosques '. Attending these holy shrines and remembering the Name of Allah and adoring Him therein not only is a means of maintaining them but .also is counted as their most important form of maintenance

Therefore, in the opposite case, whatever causes people to neglect the remembrance of the Name of Allah and keeps them apart from the mosques, is a very grand .injustice

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:Supplication

!O' Lord ! Guard us from, and against, any deviation and corruption

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Verse ۱۱۵

۱۱۵ وَ لِلّهِ الْمَشْرِقُ وَ الْمَغْرِبُ فَاَيْنَما تُوَلّوا فَثَمَّ وَجْهُ اللّهِ اِنَّ اللّهَ واسِعٌ عَليمٌ

۱۱۵. "And to Allah belong the East and the West, wherever you turn, there is the Presence of Allah. Surely Allah is All-Embracing, All-Knowing."

Occasion of Revelation:

There are different narrations cited on the cause of the occasion of revelation of this verse.

Ibn Abbas says that this verse concerns the change of the Qiblah. When Muslims' Qiblah was changed from Jerusalem to the Ka`bah, the Jews tried to reject it by objecting to the Muslims and demanding of them how the Qiblah could be changed. This verse was revealed and replied to their objection that the East and the West of the world belong to Allah.(۱)

Another tradition indicates that this verse has been revealed regarding ` the recommended prayers '. It refers to this meaning that one can pray his supererogatory prayers in any direction that his mount moves towards, even if he is facing opposite to the Qiblah.(۲)

Some others have narrated from Jābir who said that the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) once sent some of the Muslims to fight in a war. When the dark of night fell and they wanted to pray their night prayer they could not confirm the correct direction of the Qiblah. Then, every one used an approximate direction towards the Qiblah and offered his prayers. At the break of dawn they found out that they had prayed towards a direction other than the Qiblah. They informed the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) about it and the above verse was revealed declaring that their prayers were all correct in such a condition.(۳)

۱- ۱ Majma'-ul-Bayān, vol. ۱, p. ۱۹۱

Manhaj-us Sadiqin, vol. ۱, p. ۳۴۸, and AbulfuTuh-Rāzi, vol. ۱, p. ۳۰۲ ۲ -۲

Tafsir-ut-Tibyān, vol. ۱, p. ۴۲۴ and Tafsir Nimūnah, vol. ۱, p. ۴۱۳ ۳ -۳

This religious creed, of course, has some conditions that should be studied in)
(.jurisprudent books

It is realistic that all of the above occasions of revelation are correct for this verse. That is, the verse refers to the idea of the change of the Qiblah as well as reciting the supererogatory prayer when riding on a mount, and the obligatory prayers performed when the correct direction of the Qiblah is not recognizable. Besides, no verse, in principle, is allocated exclusively to its occasion of revelation, but its content should be considered as a general ordinance; and, sometimes, what a great number .of different ordinances can be derived from it

:Commentary

Allah, the Omnipresent

The previous verse was about the oppressors who prevented worship in the mosques of Allah, and strived for the destruction of them. The verse under discussion is a :continuation of the same idea. It says

And to Allah belong the East and the West, wherever you turn, there is the Presence "
"... .of Allah

It is not such that if they prevent you from entering the mosques of Allah and attending the monotheistic centers, the path of adoring Allah would be entirely closed to you. The East and the West of the world belong to Him. Whithersoever you turn, He is there. Also, the change of the Qiblah, which was ordained because of some particular circumstances, has not the least effect on our worship. Can any place be found where Allah is not there. In principle, Allah has no limited place. (A further .(explanation can be studied on page ٣٢٢

:That is why at the end of the verse, it says

".Surely Allah is All-Embracing, All-Knowing ..."

The point noteworthy here is that the East and the West mentioned in the verse

should not be taken as confined to the directions where the sun rises or sets, as they are only relative expressions. The emphasis on the East and the West may be because the first directions that man is able to recognize are these two directions, and the other

.directions can be figured out by determining them

The Qur'ān, concerning these directions, also says: " And We made a people, considered weak (and of no account), inheritors in both East and West, ...", (Sura .('A`rāf, No. ۷, verse ۱۳۷

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Philosophy of the Qiblah

Point

The first question that arises here is that if ` wherever we turn, there is the Presence ? of Allah ', then why is it necessary that we observe the direction of the Qiblah

As we will explain later, observing the Qiblah does not mean to confine the Presence of Allah to a particular direction. Since man is a creature dependent on material and concrete thought, he should pray towards whatever direction the commandment has mandated. All should pray towards a single direction in order to unite all Muslims in .single rows, and to avoid dispersion and disorder

Imagine how disgraceful it would be if every individual prayed toward a separate .direction or in dispersive rows

By the way, the direction which is appointed as the Qiblah (the direction towards the Ka`bah) is a holy place and it is the most ancient sacred site of monotheism whose .consideration evokes monotheistic remembrance

The phrase / wajhullah / does not mean ` the face of Allah ', as some have rendered, .' but it means, here, ` the Unity or Presence of Allah

As it was stated before, in the occasion of revelation, and many Islamic narrations attest to, this verse has been taken as the basic reference to certify the validity of the prayers offered by those who would pray toward a direction other than the direction of the Ka`bah by mistake or because of lack of the capability of verification. This very verse is also referred to for the validity of reciting prayers when riding on a moving

mount. (For more details concerning this subject, refer to the jurisprudential books `Wasā'il-ush-Shī`ah', `Kitāb-uṣ-Ṣalāt', and `Abwāb-ul-Qiblah'.)

p:۲۶۸

Three authentic traditions

Here, we attract your attention to three authentic traditions about the term / wajhullah / and its meaning:

1. It is cited in the book ` Al-Tauḥīd ' from Salmān Fārsī, through a tradition known as Jāthlīq, who asked Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (a.s.) some questions which were comprehensively replied to. One of them was that he asked him (a.s.) which direction his Lord's presence was. Hadrat Ali (a.s.) told Ibn Abbas to have some firewood fetched for him (a.s.). The firewood was brought and was kindled. When the fire was flaming, Ḥadrat Ali (a.s.) asked the man which direction the face of the fire was, and the Christian answered that its face was on every side.

Ali-ibn-Abītalib (a.s.) said: " This fire which is a material, is not recognized by its face, then Allah, its Creator, is not like that. ` To Allah belong the East and the West, wherever you turn, there is the Presence of Allah.' ..."(1)

2. Again, keeping in mind that the commands given by the Holy Messenger (p.b.u.h.) are those that he has received from Allah, it is narrated from Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (a.s.) who said that the manifestation of Allah (s.w.t.) is Ahlul-Bait (a.s.) who are the guides and Imams for people whose obedience to them has been enjoined by Him the same as it has been enjoined to Him and His Messenger (p.b.u.h.). That is, the only way to the cognizance of / wajhullah / ` the Presence of Allah ' and the Divine Majesty is through Ahlul-Bait (a.s.), who are His witnesses. (2) That is, haply, why they (Imams) have said: " It is through us that people know Allah, and through us (with our guidance) they worship Allah."(3)

3. Tāriq-ibn-Shahāb has narrated in a tradition from Ḥadrat Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (a.s.) who said: " O Ṭāriq ! Imām is the Word of Allah, the Proof of Allah, the Presence of Allah, the Light of Allah..."(4)

There are some other expressive narrations on the subject cited in Biḥārul-Anwār, vol. 93, p. 228, which can be referred to, too.

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At-Tauhid, by Shaykh Şaduq, p. ۱۸۲ ۱ -۱

Bihār-ul-Anwar, vol. ۹۳, p. ۱۱۸, and Al-Ihtijaj by Tabarsi ۲ -۲

Bihar-ul-Anwar, vol. ۲۳, p. ۱۰۲, Tradition ۱ ۳ -۳

Bihar-ut-Anwār, vol. ۲۵, p. ۱۶۸ ۴ -۴

۱۱۶ وَ قالُوا اتَّخَذَ اللّٰهُ وَلَداً سُبْحانَهُ بَلْ لَهُ ما فِی السَّمواتِ وَالْاَرْضِ كُلٌّ لَهُ قانِتُونَ

۱۱۷ بَدیعُ السَّمواتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَ اِذا قَضی اَمْراً فَاِنَّما یَقُولُ لَهُ كُنْ فَیَكُونُ

They said: ` Allah has taken to Himself a son '. Glory be to Him! Nay, to Him " .۱۱۶ ".belongs all that is in the heavens and on the earth: all are obedient to Him

Originator (is He) of the heavens and the earth; and when He decrees a matter " .۱۱۷ ".to be, He only says to it ` Be ' and it is

Commentary : Verses ۱۱۶-۱۱۷

The Jews, Christians, and Pagans and their Superstitions

The superstitious belief that Allah has got a child is accepted by the Christians, a group of the Jews, and some pagans. All of them believe that He has chosen a child for .Himself

Sura At-Taubah, No. ۹, verse ۳۰ says: " The Jews call `Uzair (Ezra) a son of Allah, and the Christians call Christ the son of Allah. That is a saying from their mouth; (in this) they but imitate what the Unbelievers of old used to say. Allah's curse be on them: " !how they are deluded away from the Truth

:Also, about the pagans, Sura Yūnus, No. ۱۰, verse ۶۸ says

"... !They say: ` Allah has begotten a son! ' Glory be to Him! He is Self-Sufficient"

There are many other verses in the Holy Qur'ān that refer to this inappropriate idea of .theirs

:To condemn this superstition, the first verse of the verses under discussion says

"... !They said: ` Allah has taken to Himself a son '. Glory be to Him "

Why would Allah need to take a son for Himself? Is He in need of one? Is He limited? ?Does He need to be helped? Or, is it necessary for Him to have any descendants

"... ;Nay, to Him belongs all that is in the heavens and on the earth..."

".all are obedient to Him ..."

He is not only the Possessor of all things and creatures in the world of existence, but "... ;also, " Originator (is He) of the heavens and the earth

And He has created all of them without any previous design, preparation, or without .being in need of any pre-existing material

What necessity is He forced by to have a child while everything is immediately ready ?for Him

".and when He decrees a matter to be, He only says to it ` Be ' and it is ..."

Explanation

Besides the above verse, the phrase / kun fayakūn / ` Be! and it is ' has occurred in :several verses of the Qur'ān, including the followings

Sura 'Al-i-`Imran, No. ٣, verse ٤٧ .١

Sura 'Al-i-`Imran, No. ٣, verse ٥٩ .٢

Sura Al-An`ām, No. ۶, verse ٧٣ .٣

Sura An-Naḥl, No. ١۶, verse ۴٠ .۴

Sura Maryam, No. ١٩, verse ٣۵ .۵

Sura Yāsīn, No. ٣۶, verse ٨٢ .۶

Sura Qāfir, No. ۴٠, verse ۶٨ .٧

This phrase is about the Will of Allah and His Absolute Sovereignty on the subject of

.creation

To understand this well, we should know the meaning of the Unity of Acts and the creation of all created beings by Allah's Will. Precisely, Unity of Acts, in terms of His acts, does not need any help or helper from outside Himself. Should He use any means for that purpose, the means itself is created by Him and used by Him. It is not

that He needs some help from outside Himself which is not connected to Him, and to be brought from somewhere else, or if so Allah would not be able to do whatever He wants to. No, it is not like that at all. Allah's Acts need none but Himself and His Will .alone

The explanation is that the objective meaning of the phrase / kun fayakūn / (` Be! ' and it is ) is not that Allah issues a verbal command with the word ` Be ', but the reality is that when He wills something to exist it exists. There will be no time between that Will .and its existence, not even a moment

In other words, the phrase / kun fayakūn / (` Be! ' and it is) is only to bring home to the human mind the Omnipotent Will which, properly speaking, can never be translated .into any verbal expression

Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali ibn-AbīṬālib (a.s.), of whom the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) had declared: ` I (i.e. the holy Prophet himself) am the City of knowledge and Ali is its Gate ', in referring to the phrase mentioned in this verse; regarding the Divine :Omnipotence and the execution of His Will says

Not by sound uttered, nor by voice heard, His Word, blessed be He, is Action " (proceeding from Him ".(١)

There is a similar idea in a tradition from Ḥadrat Musa-ibn-Ja`far, the seventh Imam ((a.s.), cited in Al-Kāfī as well as in Touḥid Ṣadūq. (٢)

This meaning, with a slightly different explanation, is also mentioned in Tafsīr-Burhān, .vol. ١, p. ١۴۶

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Nahjul-Balaqah, Arabic version by Subh-i-Salih, p. ٢٧۴ ١ -١

Tafsir-us-Ṣafi, vol. ١, p. ١۶٧ ٢ -٢

۱۱۸ وَ قالَ الَّذی-نَ لا- یَعْلَمُ-ونَ لَوْ لا یُکَلِّمُنَ-ا اللّهُ اَوْ تَأْتین-ا ایَ-هٌ کَذلِکَ قالَ الَّذینَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِثْلَ قَوْلِهِمْ تَشابَهَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ قَدْ بَیَّنَّا الْآیاتِ لِقَوْمٍ یُوقِنُونَ

۱۱۹ اِن-ّا اَرْسَلْن-اکَ بِالْحَ-قِّ بَشی-راً وَ نَذی-راً وَ لا تُسْئَلُ عَنْ اَصْحابِ الْجَحیمِ

۱۱۸. " And the ignorant said: ` Why does Allah not speak to us or a Sign comes not to us? ' Even thus said those before them, the like of what they say; their hearts are all alike.

Indeed We have made clear the Signs to people who are sure."

۱۱۹. " Verily, We have sent you (O' Muhammad) with the truth as a bearer of glad tidings and a warner and you shall not be questioned about the inhabitants of the Blazing Fire."

Commentary : Verses ۱۱۸-۱۱۹

Another Pretext

Similar to the pretexts of the Jews, in the initial verses of the above group of verses, another party of pretext-seekers are referred to, whom, apparently, were the Arab pagans. It says:

" And the ignorant said: ` Why does Allah not speak to us or a Sign comes not to us? ...'"

This group of unbelieving people, whom the Qur'ān has referred to as / alla…īna lā ya`lamūna / ` the ignorant ' had, indeed, two illogical demands:

۱. Why does Allah not speak to them ?

۲. Why does a Sign not come to them ?

In answer to these selfish demands, the Qur'ān says:

"... Even thus said those before them, the like of what they say;

their hearts are all alike. Indeed We have made clear the Signs to people who are ".sure

If they truly intend to understand the Truth, these very verses revealed to the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) are clear Signs to the rightfulness of his Call. Why should some verses be independently and directly revealed to each individual separately? And, ?what does it mean that a person insists that Allah must speak to him, himself, directly

A similar idea to this is also stated in Sura Al-Muddaththir, No. ۷۴, verse ۵۲, thus: " " !Forsooth, each one of them wants to be given scrolls (of revelation) spread out

This manner, in principle, besides that it is not necessary, contrasts with Divine Wisdom, because firstly, the rightfulness of the prophethood of prophets has been proved to all peoples by way of the verses which were revealed to them themselves. Secondly, it is not possible for verses and miracles to be revealed to every individual, for this needs a special kind of eligibility, preparation, and purity of soul. It closely resembles to a situation in which all the wires of the vast electrical system of a city (the strong thick wires and the very thin ones) be expected to receive the same extraordinarily high amount of electricity that immediately arrives into the initial thick wires directly from the main generator. This expectation is certainly a vain, incorrect expectation. The engineer who has arranged these various wires for different purposes has calculated the capability of each wire. Some of them convey the electricity directly and immediately from the generator, while some others do it by .means of some intermediary wires and with a variety of voltages

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The Prophet's (p.b.u.h) Duty Defined in Regard to their Pretext

The next verse addresses the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) and defines his duty regarding :their demands for miracles and other pretexts. It says

Verily, We have sent you (O' Muhammad) with the truth as a bearer of glad tidings " "… and a warner

That is, O' Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) your responsibility is that you proclaim Our commandments to all people, to illustrate the miracles, and to express the facts logically and with clear statements. This action

p:۲۷۴

should coincide with persuading the good doers and warning the evil doers. This is .your duty

".and you shall not be questioned about the inhabitants of the Blazing Fire ..."

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:Explanation

!Their Hearts are All Alike

In the above verses we learnt that the Qur'ān declares: " Even thus said those before ".them, the like of what they say; their hearts are all alike

This idea points to the fact that the passing of time and the instructions of prophets (p.b.u.h.) should have had such an effect that the later generations could gain a larger portion of knowledge so that they would put aside vain statements which are a sign of ignorance. But unfortunately, this group of people usually have no share in the process of development. They are always retrogressive so that it seems as if they belonged to thousands of years ago, and the passing of time has not affected the .least change in their minds

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Two Instructive Principles

Point

Glad tidings ' and ` warning ' or ` encouragement ' and ` threat ' form a great part ` of the motives of educational and social affairs. A person should be both encouraged for his good deeds and punished for his wrong actions, in order to be prepared for .paving the first path and avoiding the second route

Mere encouragement is not enough for the attainment of improvement in an individual or a society, because in this condition the individual is sure that committing .sin does not harm him

Mistaken Belief in 'Ransom' for Sins

The present followers of Christ (a.s.), for example, believe in ` ransom'. They think that Jesus (a.s.) has been sacrificed for their sins. Even their clergymen sometimes promise them Heaven, and forgiveness

for their sins on behalf of the Lord. It is evident that such a group of people may easily .commit sins

In a Guide to Christian Workers of the New American Standard Version Bible (pg. ١٢٩٥), :(.it is cited about Christ (a.s

".He tasted death for me, thus He bore the supreme penalty of my sins "

Surely this incorrect idea makes its followers bold in committing wrongs and .corruption

In short, those who think mere encouragement is enough in training men (irrespective of children or adults) and threats, punishment and revenge have no place and should be completely put aside, are completely wrong. On the other hand, those who, neglecting the encouraging aspect, think that training is based only on .threats and terror are on a wrong path as well

These two groups have a mistaken conception of Man, because they do not have this fact in mind: that Man is made up of a combination of hope and fear, love of living and .hatred of destruction. His nature is to attract gain and to repel loss

Observing the parallel between encouragement and punishment for training people

Observing the parallel between these two principles is particularly essential since if encouragement and hope goes beyond limits, it results in boldness and negligence. And when threats and punishment is abundant, it produces despair and extinguishes .the flames of love and vitality

For the exact same reason, in the verses of the Qur'ān, the terms ` glad tidings ' and ` warning ' have occurred in conjunction with each other. It has happened that the term ` glad tidings ' has sometimes preceded the term ` warning ', like in the verse under discussion; and sometimes it is vice versa, as in Sura Al-A`rāf, No. ٧, verse ١٨٨, which :says

".I am a warner and a bringer of glad tidings to those who have Faith ..."

In fact, in the majority of these verses of the Qur'ān, `glad tidings ' has preceded ` warning '. This may be because, in general, the Mercy and Grace of Allah have preceded His Wrath and punishment, as we call Him in supplications: " O' He Whose ".Mercy precedes His Wrath

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Verses ۱۲۰–۱۲۱

۱۲۰ وَلَنْ تَرْضـى عَنْکَ الْیَهُودُ وَ لاَـ النَّصـاری حَـتّی تَتَّبِـعَ مِلَّتَهُمْ قُـلْ اِنَّ هُـدَی اللّهِ هُوَ الْهُـدی وَ لَئِنِ اتَّبَعْتَ اَهْواءَهُمْ بَعْـدَ الَّذی
جاءَکَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ ما لَکَ مِنَ اللّهِ مِنْ وَلِیٍّ وَلا نَصیرٍ

۱۲۱ اَلَّذینَ اتَیْناهُمُ الْکِتابَ یَتْلُونَهُ حَقَّ تِلاوَتِه اُولـئِکَ یُؤْمِنُونَ بِه وَ مَنْ یَکْفُرْ بِه فَاُولـئِکَ هُمُ الْخاسِرُونَ

۱۲۰. " For, never will the Jews be pleased with you nor the Christians unless you follow their religion. Say:

` Behold Allah's guidance is the only (true) guidance.'

And verily if you follow their desires after the knowledge has come to you, you shall have from Allah neither protector nor helper."

۱۲۱. " Those to whom We have given the Book read it as it ought to be read, they are the ones that truly believe in it, and whoever disbelieves in it, they shall (surely) be the losers."

Occasion of Revelation:

On the occasion of revelation of the first of the above verses, it is narrated from Ibn Abbas that the Jews in Medina and the Christians from Najrān expected that the Prophet of Islam (p.b.u.h.) would traditionally accept the same Qiblah as they had. When Allah altered the Qiblah from Jerusalem to the Ka`bah, they became disheartened with the Prophet of Islam (p.b.u.h.). (Perhaps, some of the Muslim believers, too, criticized that they should not do anything that would offend the Jews and the Christians).

The above verse was revealed and informed the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) that that group of Jews and Christians would be satisfied with him neither by coming into agreement upon the Qiblah nor by anything else

(except that he would follow their creeds.(1

Some others have narrated that the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) insisted very much on convincing them to accept Islam. The above verse was revealed telling him (p.b.u.h.) to disregard that idea because never would they be pleased with him unless he (followed their religion.(2

There are also various narrations upon the occasion of revelation of the second of the above verses. Some of the commentators believe that this verse was revealed about those people who came with Ja`far-ibn-AbīṬālib from Abyssina to Medina. They had joined Islam and accompanied him when he left there. They were ۴۰ men, thirty-two of whom were from Abyssina and eight men were from the monks of Syria among (whom there was a famous Christian monk by the name of Baḥīrā.(3

Some other commentators believe that the verse was revealed about some people from among the Jews such as Abdillāh-ibn-Salām, Shu`bat-ibn-`Amru, Tamām-ibn-Yahūdā, and so on who accepted the invitation of Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) and (became true believers.(4

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:Commentary

!Two Unsatisfiable Groups

The previous verse relieves Hadrat Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) of any responsibility concerning those stubborn misguided people. Now, this verse, elaborating on the :same idea, informs the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) of the reason why it is so

For, never will the Jews be pleased with you nor the Christians unless you follow " "... .their religion

"... .'Say: ` Behold Allah's guidance is the only (true) guidance ..."

Abul-Futuh Rāzi, Commentary, vol. ١, p. ٣٠٨ ١ -١

Majma'-ul-Bayān, vol. , p. ١٩٧ ٢ -٢

Majma'-ul-Bayān, vol. ١, p. ١٩٨ ٣ -٣

Ibid, and Tafsir Abul-Futūh Rāzi, vol. ١, p. ٣١٠ ۴ -۴

Allah's guidance is a guidance which is not adulterated with superstitions and wrong .thoughts of ignorant people. Yes, such pure noble guidance should be followed

:Then, it adds

And verily if you follow their desires after the knowledge has come to you, you shall ..." ".have from Allah neither protector nor helper

****

But, since some of the Jewish and Christian truth-seekers accepted the invitation of the Prophet of Islam (p.b.u.h.) and embraced Islam, the Holy Qur'ān, after scorning :the aforementioned group, commemorates this group well by saying

Those to whom We have given the Book read it as it ought to be read, they are the " "... ,ones that truly believe in it

".and whoever disbelieves in it, they shall (surely) be the losers ..."

These people were those who truly read their Divine Book as it ought to be read and followed it accordingly. This manner of striving resulted in their being guided. Therein, they had studied the glad tidings of the advent of the promised prophet and they found those attributes congruous with Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam (p.b.u.h.), so .thereby they submitted, and Allah, therefore, appreciated them

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:Explanation

Point

The phrase / wa la 'initaba`ta 'ahwā'ahum /, ` and verily if you follow their desires ', may prompt the readers of the verse to ask this question: Was it possible that Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) would, with his inerrant position of prophethood, follow the ?desires of those misguided Jews

In answer to this question we say that these statements, which are frequently cited in

the verses of the Qur'ān, do not contradict with the state of inerrancy of prophets (p.b.u.th.), because on one hand, it is a conditional sentence, therefore the mentioning of the protasis does not

.mean that the action will definitely be performed

On the other hand, the state of being immune from sin does not refute the capability of committing sin and err by prophets (p.b.u.th.). Although prophets and Imams (p.b.u.th.) are able to commit sin and their free will is not taken away from them, they would never contaminate themselves with corruption or even taint their souls with a single sin. In other words, they can commit sins but their belief, knowledge, and virtue is so intense that they never draw near to any sin. Therefore, such admonishments as .the above are completely appropriate for them

Thirdly, this statement, although addressing the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.), may envelop .all believers entirely

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Pleasing Enemies has its Limits

It is true that one should attract the enemies' attention towards his invitation with the magnetic power of excellent ethics and superior character, but there are some who never accept the truth. They are not worth worrying about. They will never believe in .the true path, hence, endeavouring to attract their attention is a waste of time

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Allah's Guidance is the Only True Guidance

This fact is also understood from the above verses that the only law which can lead man towards salvation and happiness is the law and guidance of Allah, because to whatever extent the knowledge of man progresses, it is still interwoven with ignorance, doubt and deficiency from the points of view of various aspects. Hence, the guidance which comes forth under the shade of such incomplete knowledge cannot be considered an absolute guidance. The only One Who can provide `Absolute ,' Guidance ' is the One Who possesses ` Absolute Knowledge

.without any ignorance or imperfection. This Attribute applies only to Allah

?How Should the Book be Read

Point

This meaning is an expressive one which defines a clear path for us regarding the Holy Qur'ān, the Divine Book. Now, those who read the verses of the Qur'ān are :defined in several groups

Three Groups of Readers Defined

One of these groups emphasize on the forms of pronunciation and articulation of the phonemes and morphemes and also the overall intonation of the verses of the Qur'ān with their own proper Arabic points of articulation. They always think of linguistical regulations for the Arabic pronunciation of the signs and sounds, pauses and extensions, and, finally, for observing the special letters in the Qur'ān known as /yarmalūn/. They usually are not particularly concerned with the meaning and the content of the verses they read. When they disregard the meaning of the Qur'ān, their actions accordingly are obvious. The example of this kind of people is depicted in the Qur'ān saying: "...is as the likeness of the ass bearing books...", (Sura Al-Jumu`ah, .(No. ۶۲, verse ۵

The second group are those who, in addition to the verbal utterances, pay close attention to the meanings of the verses and contemplate over the elegancies and .exquisite points of the Qur'ān

They try to understand the sciences described therein, but they do not actually .comply with its ordinances

The third group are those true believers who accept the Qur'ān as a mandate of action and use it as a comprehensive program for their lives. They consider the recitation of this great Book, contemplation over its meanings, and conception of its purposes as preliminary for their actions. That is why whenever they recite the Qur'ān, a fresh and pleasing state encompasses their souls allowing them to make new decisions with vigorous intention and a strong inner feeling of preparedness for

their actions. This is, perhaps, the privilege granted for reading the Book in the way in .which it ought to be read

A tradition from Imam Ṣādiq (a.s.), commenting on this verse, says: " They recite its verses slowly, and understand it, and act according to its orders, and hope for its promises, and are afraid of its threats, and take lessons from its stories, and obey its commandments, and desist from what it prohibits. By God, it does not mean ,memorizing its verses

and studying its letters, and reciting its chapters, and learning its one-tenths and one-fifths. They remembered its words and neglected its boundaries. And what it means is meditating on its verses and acting according to its orders. Allah, the High, has said: `(It is) a Book We have sent down to you abounding in good, so that they may ponder (over its verses'...", (۳۸: ۲۹), (Irshādul-Qulūb, ad-Daylamī).(۱)

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۱- (English version (Al-Mizān, commentary, vol. ۲, p. ۷۰

١٢٢ يا بَنى إِسْرائِـ-لَ اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتِىَ الَّتى اَنْعَمْتُ عَلَيْكَمْ وَ اَنّى فَضَّلْتُكَمْ عَلَى الْعالَمينَ

١٢٣ وَاتَّقُوا يَوْمًا لا تَجْزى نَفْسٌ عَنْ نَفْسٍ شَيْئًا وَ لا يُقْبَلُ مِنْها عَدْلٌ وَ لا تَنْفَعُها شَفاعَةٌ وَلاهُمْ يُنْصَرُونَ

١٢٢. "O' Children of Israel ! call to mind My favour which I bestowed on you and that I made you excel all the nations (of that time)."

١٢٣. "And guard yourselves against a day when no one in the least shall avail another, neither shall any ransom be accepted from any one, nor shall intercession profit any one, nor shall they be helped (from outside)."

Commentary: Verses ١٢٢-١٢٣

Point

Once again, in these verses, Allah addresses the Children of Israel and reminds them of His favours bestowed on them; particularly that He preferred them to all other nations of their time.

"O' Children of Israel ! call to mind My favour which I bestowed on you and that I made you excel all the nations (of that time)."

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Blessings Come with Responsibilities

But, since every blessing is followed by a corresponding responsibility, and, therefore, Allah gives man a duty or a responsibility to undertake for each bounty which is given him, in the next verse He threatens him by saying:

"And guard yourselves against a day when no one in the least shall avail another, ..."

"... neither shall any ransom be accepted from any one, ..."

"... nor shall intercession profit any one, ..."

And, if you think that anyone can help others that day, save Allah, you are mistaken, because He says:

".(nor shall they be helped (from outside..."

Therefore, none of the means of rescue that they would grope for in this world to save themselves, will be available there. There will be only one way open to them .which is the path of Faith, good action, repentance of sins, and self-improvement

Intercession

These two verses are quite similar to verses ۴۷ and ۴۸ of the current Sura, where we explained the idea of intercession in detail. Here, it is referred to, again, reminding that the warning, i.e. that `intercession shall not be of any avail ', does not at all mean that the intercession by the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) or any other of his divine allies will also be ineffective on the Day of Judgement. It is a warning against the disbelievers who, as a figment of their own fanciful imaginations, think that their guardian deities, gods or goddesses will come to their aid, or to those of the Jews and Christians who stubbornly claim the intercession of Moses (a.s.), or that Christ's (a.s.) blood has been paid as a ransom for the sins of his followers. This verse clearly denies any such ransom for sins or intercession for the sinners who do not believe in the divinely promised Last Apostle of Allah, Muhammad Mustafā (p.b.u.h.), and reject faith in the truth which he preached. But, as it was mentioned before, the intercession of the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) or the other holy ones (a.s.) will be accepted by the leave of Allah .(.(s.w.t

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۱۲۴ وَ اِذِ ابْتَل-ى اِبْرهيمَ رَبُّهُ بِكَلِماتٍ فَاَتَمَّهُنَّ قالَ اِنّى جاعِلُكَ لِلنّاسِ اِمامًا قالَ وَ مِنْ ذُرِّيَّتى قالَ لايَنالُ عَهْدِى الظّالِمينَ

And (remember) when his Lord tested Abraham with words (of command) which " .۱۲۴ :he fulfilled. He said

'.Verily, I have appointed you an Imam (leader) for mankind `

' ?(Abraham) pleaded: ` And of my offspring (as well)

".' He, (Allah) said: ` My covenant does not include the unjust

Commentary : Verse ۱۲۴

Imāmat, the Climax of Abraham's (a.s.) Honour

From this verse on, the topics of discussion are Abraham (a.s.), the honourable prophet of Allah and the hero of Monotheism, the structure of the Ka`bah, the sacred site of worship, and the importance of this great monotheistic center. These subjects are referred to in the next eighteen verses. Three main ideas were the objectives of :these verses

The first aim was that they might provide people with the necessary preparation for the change of the direction of the Qiblah and to inform Muslims that the Ka`bah is a legacy of Abraham (a.s.), the idol-breaker. If pagans and idol-worshippers used it as an idol temple, it was only temporarily and it did not decrease the glorious high rank of .the Ka`bah at all

The second goal was to address the problem of the Jews and Christians who were claiming to be the heirs of Abraham (a.s.) and his religion. These verses, reflecting back on the numerous former verses about the Jews, clarify how very unfamiliar they .(.were with the creed of Abraham (a.s

The third purpose was that Arab pagans believed in a special incessant ancestral link ,between them and Abraham (a.s.). They, too

had to be made to understand that their belief systems and codes of behavior had no .similarity with that of Abraham (a.s.), the iconoclastic prophet

:In this verse, at first, it says

And (remember) when his Lord tested Abraham with words (of command) which he " "... .fulfilled

Yes, this verse speaks about the important occurrences in Abraham's life, i.e. his great tests and how he passed them successfully, which illustrates his high rank and .superior personality and manifests the worthiness of his being

When Abraham (a.s.) passed these trials successfully, Allah saw fit to give him a gift as :a prize. Therefore, addressing him

"...'.He said:` Verily, I have appointed you an Imam (leader) for mankind..."

In order that this Divine gift would continue in his seed, and prophethood and ` :Imāmat ' would not come to an end with his death

"...' ?Abraham) pleaded: ` And of my offspring) ..."

: The answer to this question was

".' He (Allah) said: ` My covenant does not include the unjust..."

That is, I accepted your plea, but only for those of your offspring who are doers of .righteous deeds and are pure and sinless i.e. those who are worthy of this rank

****

: Explanation

? What does ` Words ' Mean

Studying the verses of the Qur'ān and noting the great and important deeds that Abraham (a.s.) fulfilled and, hence, being appointed to the position of Imāmat by Allah,

leads us to the conclusion that the term / kalimāt / meaning ` words ', or the Divine commandments by which Abraham (a.s.) was tried, were not those of the usual sort. It clearly indicates that the tests were not connected with matters of ordinary reasoning or faith. They can never be considered ordinary tests. The purpose of the ` words ' was a series of heavy, hard, laborious, grave duties which were given to Abraham, the sincere pure

prophet (a.s.), and he was the only one who had the qualifications to successfully complete them. Some of those commandments were such as the followings:

One trial was concerning the steadfastness of his faith in Allah.

Abraham (a.s.) was commanded through a vision in a dream to slay his son Ishmael. When he awoke, he unhesitatingly acted as he was bidden, (۳۷: ۱۰۵-۱۰۸). This indicates that Abraham (a.s.) already knew that he was Allah's prophet and what he saw in the vision was no other than Allah's command. With such a certainty in his mind, he was willing to do, by Allah's command, something that no other loving or sensible father possibly could slay his own son.

In another incident, by Allah's command, he took and left his wife and his infant son to an area of dry land, where no food and water or any inhabitants could be found.

He also stood against the idol-worshippers of Babylon and very bravely defended Monotheism in his historical trial after he had broken their idols. He miraculously held firm in faith and patience when he was thrown into the midst of fire.

Recalcitrating, he emigrated from the land of idol-worshippers, and went to a faraway region in order to proclaim his prophecy.

He did many things similar to those mentioned above and each of those trials was, indeed, heavy and difficult for a man to undertake, but he, with the power of Faith, was able to perform them successfully thereby proving himself worthy of the position of ` Imāmat ', Divine leadership.

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Eligibility for Imāmat

Point

Precisely speaking, it is understood from the above mentioned verse that the position and rank of Imāmat which was bestowed upon Abraham (a.s.), only after successfully enduring those frequent difficult trials, was above and beyond the rank of

.prophethood

?Imam–What Does it Mean

The primary sense of meaning of the term / imām / is that of being foremost, but it :also has other different meanings including

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A) Leadership in the worldly social affairs of people, (as the Sunnite school of thought believes).

B) Authority over the religious affairs of people in this world (as some others of them have interpreted).

C) Responsibility of bringing religious duties into action, whether it is through the establishment of government in its vast meaning or performing the commandments and ordinances of Allah, and the execution of social justice along with the training of souls, both outwardly and inwardly. The rank of Imāmat is higher than the rank of prophethood, because prophethood and messengership is only a matter of receiving some commandments from Allah and preaching them as glad tidings and warnings. All of these are true in the case of Imāmat, in addition to practicing the Divine ordinances and training the souls of individuals, outwardly and inwardly. (It is clear, of course, that many of the prophets had had the rank of Imāmat, too.)

Imāmat, in fact, is the position of presenting the aims of religion practically, and guidance is ` attaining the ideal ' not merely ` showing the way '.

Besides that, Imāmat includes ` Divine Guidance ', too. It means the innate quality of the Imam's spiritual influence and the attracting glow of his pureness encompassing, deeply touching, and truly effecting the realm of receptive people's hearts which results in their spiritual guidance.

From this point of view, an Imam is just like the sun that, with its life-giving light, fosters and gives vitality to all living creatures. The function of an Imam in spiritual aspects is the same as the physical function of the sun.

The Holy Qur'ān says: " He it is Who sends blessings on you, as do His angels, that He may bring you out from the depths of Darkness into Light: and He is Full of Mercy to the Believers ", (Sura Al-Aḥzāb, No. ٣٣, verse ٤٣).

It is well understood from this verse that the special mercies of Allah and the hidden aid given by His angels can lead the believers and those who trust in Him to come out

.' from ` darkness ' into ` light

This is also true about an Imam. The innate authority of an Imam and the great prophets (a.s.) who had also possessed the rank of Imāmat

as well as their vicegerents, had a deep effect on receptive individuals by which they could train them and therefore bring them from the depths of ignorance and error .into the light of guidance

There is no doubt that the purpose of Imāmat in this verse is the third meaning, because it is understood from many of the verses of the Qur'ān that the concept of ` :guidance ' lies within the meaning of Imāmat, as Sura As-Sajdah, No. ٣٢, verse ٢٤ says

And We appointed, from among them, leaders, giving guidance under Our " Command, so long as they persevered with patience and continued to have Faith in ".Our Signs

This guidance does not mean merely ` showing the way ', because, in principle, Abraham (a.s.) had the rank of prophethood and Messengership for giving guidance in .the sense of ` showing the way ' before becoming an Imam

(Imamate Bestowed on Abraham (a.s

However, the Qur'ān clearly attests to this fact that Imāmat was bestowed on Abraham (a.s.) when he persevered with patience in tolerating the difficulties which he encountered as he paved the path of certitude alongside his Faith, and passed his various great tests successfully. This rank was above and beyond the rank of .guidance with the meaning of preaching glad tidings and warning people

Therefore, guidance within the concept of Imāmat is nothing save ` attaining the ideal ', cherishing the soul of religion and bringing forth training programmes for the .individuals who are prepared to grasp them

This meaning is cited in an expressive tradition from Imam Ṣādiq (a.s.) which says: " Verily, Allah, the Blessed, the Sublime, took Abraham (a.s.) as His slave before He took him as a prophet. And verily Allah took him as His prophet before He took him as a messenger. And Allah took him as His messenger before He made him a confident (khalil). Allah took him as a confident before He appointed him as an Imam. When He had brought all these things together in him: He (Allah) said: ` Verily, I have appointed ".'you an Imam (leader) for mankind

The Imam (a.s.) continued: " Since this was something very great in the eyes of Abrahām, he said: ` And of my offspring (as well)? ' He (Allah) said: ` My covenant ".' does not include the unjust

The Imam (a.s.) concluded: " A stupid person cannot be the Imām

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of the pious." This means that only those seed of Abraham (a.s.) who were pure and .infallible were worthy of being Imām

Prophethood, Messengership, Imāmat and their Differences

As it is understood from the verses of the Qur'ān and various ideas existing in traditions and Islamic literature, those who were commissioned by Allah had different .ranks

A. Prophethood means the ability to receive revelation from Allah. Then, a prophet is one on whom the Divine revelation comes down and whatever he receives by .revelation he delivers to people

B. Messengership means to preach the Divine revelation, to spread the ordinances of Allah, and to train the souls and minds of individuals through education and acknowledgement. Therefore, a Messenger is he who is commissioned, by effort and endeavour and utilizing any acceptable and proper means available to him, to invite people unto Allah and His commandments in order to elicit an ideological, convictional, .educational and mental transformation in them

C. Imāmat, means to guide and lead people. In fact, an Imam is he who tries to execute, actually, Allah's ordinances by acquiring the power necessary to organize a godly government; and if he is not able to organize a formal government, he does his .best in carrying out the ordinances of Allah, both personally and socially

In other words, an Imam is commissioned to execute Allah's commandments and assure their performance, while a Messenger is commissioned to preach those commandments. Again, in other words, a Messenger shows the path but an Imam, besides his other heavy responsibilities which were pointed out before, paves the .' path for ` attaining the ideal

,Let it not remain unsaid that it is clear that many of the prophets

.like the Prophet of Islam (p.b.u.h.), were possessors of all three ranks

They had Divine revelation bestowed upon them. They preached the commandments of Allah, and endeavoured in organizing godly governments for executing His ordinances, while they were training the souls of people according to their own .religions

:In brief, Imāmat is the essence of leadership in all aspects

materially and spiritually, physically and theologically, apparently and hiddenly. Imam is the chief of government as well as the leader of the society, a guide in religious .affairs, and a teacher of ethics to train people both inwardly and outwardly

It is the Imam who, with his mysterious spiritual strength, guides receptive persons forward along the path of inner development, instructs the ignorant ones with his ability and knowledge, and, by means of his government or other executive resources .enforces the principles of Justice

(.Imāmat, the Climactical Rank of Abraham (a.s

In defining the reality of Imāmat, it was made clear that a person may become a prophet or a Messenger while he has not been appointed as an Imam. This position demands special eligibility in all aspects. It is the same position that Abraham (a.s.) attained after successfully passing many difficult tests and proving his genuine .worthiness; this being the last step of his development to qualify for that rank

Some may imagine that the qualifications of an Imam is only that a person ` be worthy and a model '. They do not consider the fact that this condition existed in Abraham from the very beginning of his prophethood. Furthermore, not only Abraham, but also all prophets and Messengers, had had this epithet from the onset of their calling. It is for this reason that a prophet should be sinless since his deeds are considered as models. Therefore, Abraham (a.s.), who was a prophet and Messenger of Allah, was gifted the rank of Imāmat by Allah after he passed his trials successfully .and proved that he was worthy of it

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p:۲۹۱

? Who is Unjust

The objective meaning of the Arabic word ` the unjust ' mentioned in this verse: " My covenant does not include the unjust " is not only ` being unjust to others '. But the term ` unjust ' (in contrast with the philosophical meaning of ` justice ' which means to set everything in its own proper place), here, is used with its broad sense of .meaning

Thus, committing an ` unjust ' act means that ` a person, an action, or a thing has .' been arranged in a situation which is not appropriate

Since the position of Imāmat and the outward and inward leadership of people is an extraordinarily splendid position with many responsibilities, the committing of the .slightest sin or disobedience disqualifies a person from attaining this rank

So, in the traditions of Ahlul-Bait (a.s.) we see that, for proving the vicegerency of Hadrat Ali (a.s.) immediately after the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.), they have quoted this very verse as justification, indicating that others had been idol-worshippers before Islam, in the age of ignorance, and the only person who did not prostrate before an idol, besides Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.), even for a moment was Ali-ibn-Abitālib (a.s.). What unjust act is greater than that a person performs idol-worshipping! Did !Luqmān not tell his son: " O my son

Join not in worship (others) with Allah: for false worship is indeed the highest wrong-.(doing " ? (Sura Luqmān, No. ٣١, verse ١٣

Hishām-ibn-Sālim, as an example, narrates from Imam Ṣādiq (a.s.) who said: " Surely, Abraham was a prophet but he was not an Imam until when Allah said: ` Verily, I have appointed you an Imam (leader) for mankind '. Abraham pleaded: ` And of my offspring (as well)? ' He (Allah) answered: ` My covenant does not include the unjust '. (Those who have worshipped an idol, they will not be an Imam (leader)."(١)

In another tradition, `Abdillah-ibn-Mas`ūd narrates from the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) who said: " Allah told Abraham: ` I do not give you My covenant (of Imāmat) for the unjust of your children.' Abraham said: `Who are these unjust whom Your covenant

' ?does not include of my offspring

Allah said: ` Whoever prostrated before an idol, leaving Me, I will never

p:۲۹۲

.Usul-Kafi, vol. ۱, chapter: prophets and Messengers, Tradition ۱۱ -۱

(make him an Imam ', and he is not worthy of being an Imam ..."(1)

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An Imam, by Allah's Commission

It is also understood from the current verse that an Imam (a sinless comprehensive leader of people) should be appointed by Allah. The reason is that: firstly, Imāmat is a kind of covenant from Allah and it is evident that such a person should be ordained by Him, the One Who is the Maker of the covenant.

Secondly, the persons who have even tainted their lives with iniquity, even as small as a dark spot, whether it is against themselves or against others, or if there is a sign of idol-worshipping even for a short period of time in their lives, they are not eligible for Imāmat. They should be perfectly sinless throughout their whole lives in order to become an Imam.

It is Allah who knows the hearts and minds of men and has given us criteria by which to evaluate them. This point will be discussed more comprehensively at a later time.

If we want to recognize the vicegerent of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.), according to the above criterion, there would not be any one save Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (a.s.).

It is noteworthy that the writer of Al-Manār narrates from Abū-Ḥanīfah that he believed the government of the time was exclusively suitable for the Alawites. That was why he approved rebellion against their ruling government (which was headed by Mansūr of the Abbasides). And it was also for the same reason that he did not agree, himself, to be in charge of the position of Supreme Court Judge in the government of the Abbasides.

Then, the writer of Al-Manār adds that the four kalifs of the Sunnite school of thought all did not agree with the governments of their time, whom they did not approve as worthy chiefs of the Muslims,

Al-Amali, by Shaykh Tusi, published in ۱۴۱۴, p. ۳۷۹ ۱ -۱

(because the governors were some cruel unjust ones.(1)

It is ironical that, in our time, some of the Sunnite scholars approve and support the tyrannical governments whose relations with the enemies of Islam are certain and definite, and their mischief and unjust acts are clear to all. But, this is insignificant compared to the fact that, they also consider them / 'ulul'amr / ` political and religious chieves' and / wājib ul 'itā`ah / ` necessary to be obeyed.'

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Two Questions

This fact should also be noted that the concept of Imāmat does not necessarily mean that an Imam forcedly leads all people to the Truth; but it means that people having their own free will, together with their potential for receptiveness and their eligibility, can take advantage of and use the Imam's quality of effectiveness in outward and inward leadership in order to be guided.

It is just like we stated earlier, that the sun has been created to furnish light, heat and energy for all living creatures which have the potential to receive these bounties and are capable of development.

Another question that may be proposed is that according to the above commentary it seems that, every Imam previously must have been a prophet or a Messenger and then be appointed as an Imam, whereas the sinless vicegerents of the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) were not in such a position.

As an answer, we say that it is not necessary that the Imam, himself, be previously a prophet or a Messenger and then reach that position. When his predecessor had the rank of prophethood, Messengership and Imāmat, (such as the Prophet of Islam (p.b.u.h.)), the eligible vicegerent can continue executing the duties of Imāmat as an Imam. This situation occurs when a new Messenger is not needed, like after the Prophet of Islam (p.b.u.h.), who is the seal of the prophets.

In other words, if the process of receiving Divine revelation and

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Al-Manar, vol. ۱, pp. ۴۵۷-۴۵۸ ۱ -۱

communicating all the ordinance have been formerly performed and only the stage of their execution remains, the true successors of the prophet can continue the prophet's line of execution, and it does not necessitate that he, himself, be a prophet .or a Messenger

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(.The Distinguished Personality of Abraham (a.s

Abraham's (a.s.) name is mentioned in the Holy Qur'ān in ۶۹ occurrences which are gathered in ۲۵ Suras. In these verses, this great prophet (a.s.), whose worthy epithets are mentioned therein, is highly praised and appreciated by Allah from all aspects. He .was a prototype, an example, of a complete human being

The supremeness of his knowledge about Allah, his clear logical statements against idol-worshippers, his intense efforts and endeavours in challenging with the tyrants of his time, his dedication and forbearance in obeying the commands of Allah, and his unique perseverance against the storms of adventures and grievous trials, are all good examples for Muslims, and those who pave the path towards Allah, to take and .follow in their lives as their models

As the Qur'ān says about Abraham (a.s.), he was of the elect and good, (۱) in the ranks of the Righteous,(۲) a model,(۳) a man of truth,(۴) most tender-hearted, and forbearing.(۵) Furthermore, he was incomparably brave and extraordinarily generous .as well

Allah Willing, we will offer a more detailed explanation concerning this matter later when commenting on some of the verses of Sura Ibrāhīm, No. ۱۴, especially the last .part of the Sura

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۱- Sura ṣad, No. ۳۸, verse ۴۷ ۱

Sura Nahl, No. ١۶, verse ١٢٢ ٢ -٢

Ibid. verse ١٢٠ ٣ -٣

Sura Maryam, No. ١٩, verse ۴١ ۴ -۴

Sura Al-Taubah, No. ٩, verse ١١۴ ۵ -۵

۱۲۵ وَ اِذْ جَعَلْنَا الْبَيْتَ مَثابَةً لِلنّاسِ وَ اَمْنًا وَاتَّخِذُوا مِنْ مَقامِ اِبْرهيمَ مُصَلّيً وَ عَهِـدْنـا اِلـى اِبْـرهـيـمَ وَ اِسْمـعيـلَ اَنْ طَـهِّـرا بَيْتِـىَ لِلطّائِفينَ وَالْعاكِفينَ وَالرُّكَّعِ السُّجُودِ

.۱۲۵ " And (remember) when We made the House (the Ka`bah in Mecca) a resort and a secure sanctuary for the people, (saying):

` Take to yourselves Abraham's Station for a place of prayer '.

And We enjoined Abraham and Ismail (saying):

` Sanctify My House for those who go around it, for those who abide in it and pay devotion, and to those who bow down and prostrate themselves '."

Commentary : Verse ۱۲۵

The Magnificence of the Ka`bah

After explaining the high rank of Abraham (a.s.) stated in the previous verse, the Qur'ān, in this verse, directs attention towards the magnificence of the House, the Ka`bah in Mecca, which was built by Abraham and his son (a.s.). It says:

" And (remember) when We made the House (the Ka`bah in Mecca) a resort and a secure sanctuary for the people, ..."

Since the term / maābah /, originally based on / aub /, means ` a place to which people return ' or ` a place where people assemble ', and the Ka`bah has been a center where monotheists gather every year, then, by this assembly, believers, not only bodily but also spiritually, return to Divine Unity and to their intrinsic nature. So, that may be why the term / maābah / (a resort, an abode, a house) has been used for this Sacred House. And, since a man's house is the continuous returning site of its inhabitants who, after having completed their affairs, can experience rest and tranquility therein, there lies this sense of

resting and tranquility in the meaning of the term / maābah /. This emphasizes the concept of its next word / amnan / ` secure sanctuary ' especially with the word ` people ', which indicates that this secure center is a common refuge for all people of .the world

This is, in fact, the acceptance by Allah of one of the requests that Abraham (a.s.) (.sought. (We will discuss this subject on page ٣٠٠

:Then, it adds

"...'.saying): ` Take to yourselves Abraham's Station for a place of prayer) ..."

The opinions of the commentators are divided as to what` Abraham's Station ' is. Some of them have said that the whole Hajj is Abraham's Station. Some others have rendered it to / `arafah / ` the Mount of Recognition ', / maš`arul ḥarām / ` Sacred Monument ', and /jamarāt/ ` lapidations '; while others believe that the entire sacred .' premises of Mecca is considered the ` Station

But, as many Islamic narrations denote, and many of the commentators have said, too, the verse apparently refers to the very standing-place of Abraham which is located close to the Ka`bah where pilgrims offer their circumambulatory prayer after performing their ritual circumambulation of the Ka`bah. Thus, the purpose of the .term /muṣallā/, mentioned in the verse, is ` the place of prayer ', too

Then, it refers to the covenant that He made with Abraham (a.s.) and Ismail (a.s.) :about the purification of the Ka`bah, where it says

:(And We enjoined Abraham and Ismail (saying ..."

Sanctify My House for those who go around it, for those who abide in it and pay ` ".' devotion, and to those who bow down and prostrate themselves

What is the meaning of sanctification here? Some have said that the meaning of .sanctification here is purification from the existence of idols

Some others have said that the purpose is purification from outward dirt like blood

and the contents of animals' stomachs which people sacrificed therein, because there were some ignorant persons who thoughtlessly did such deeds as leaving these remains behind.

Furthermore, some believe that sanctification, here, means ` purity of intent ' when building this House of Monotheism.

p:۲۹۷

There is no reason for us to confine the meaning of sanctification

here. Its purpose is purification of this ` House of Monotheism ' from

.any dirt, physically and spiritually

It is for this reason that in some traditions we read that this verse

has been rendered into sanctification from pagans and in some others

.into washing and purifying the body from dirt

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: Explanation

The Secure Refuge, its Social and Educational Effects

According to the above verse, ` the House of Ka`bah ' has been chosen and proclaimed as ` a secure refuge ' by Allah. We know that there are resolute rules in Islam instructing every believer to avoid any quarrel, war, fight and bloodshed within the limits of this Holy land, Mecca. It is so that not only the members of humankind, regardless of nationality, race, gender, group, or condition, should be safe and secure there, but also animals and birds are protected there, in that nobody is allowed to hurt .them

In this world, where fighting and wars are always within the overall scene, the existence of such a peaceful center can function as a special helpful fortress within which the problems of many nations can be solved. The security of this region lets different peoples, with all their differences and enmities that they may have, gather together therein, sitting, speaking, and solving their difficulties. Thus, one of the most important problems which usually exists, initiating face to face oral communications .about dismissing or decreasing enmities between nations, can be solved

It frequently happens that the two sides of a conflict or the opposing governments in the world are willing to put an end to their antagonism and have parley for this

purpose, but they cannot find a secure and respectable place wherein both sides can feel free to speak therein peacefully and securely. This case has been anticipated in .Islam, and Mecca is introduced as such a center

p:۲۹۸

Now that most of the Muslims of the world are unfortunately involved in some hostile conflicts, they can make use of this sacred secure land, and, under its banner of holiness and special spirituality which enlightens the hearts, begin speaking with each .other to solve their problems

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? Why the ` House ' of Ka`bah

In the above verse, the Ka`bah is referred to by the Lord as ` My House ', while it is clear that neither is Allah bodily substance nor does He need a House. The purpose, here, is to honour and glorify the Ka`bah by stating its honour and lofty status, and, .' therefore, it is called /baytullah / ` the House of Allah

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١٢۶ وَ اِذْ قالَ اِبْرهيمُ رَبِّ اجْعَلْ هذا بَلَداً امِنًا وَارْزُقْ اَهْلَهُ مِنَ الثَّمَراتِ مَنْ امَنَ مِنْهُمْ بِاللّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الاْخِرِ قالَ وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَاُمَتِّعُهُ قَليلاً ثُمَّ اَضْطَرُّهُ اِلى عَذابِ النّارِ وَ بِئْسَ الْمَصيرُ

And (remember) when Abraham said: ` My Lord, make this a secure City and " .١٢۶ provide its people with fruits such of them that believe in Allah and the Last Day.' He :said

And whoever disbelieves, I shall let him enjoy himself for a little while, then I shall ` " ' ! drive him to the Punishment of Fire and an evil destination it is

Commentary : Verse ١٢۶

! Abraham's (a.s.) Petition to Allah

In this verse Abraham (a.s.) asks Allah two great requests in favour of the inhabitants :of this Holy land, one of which was referred to in the previous verse. The Qur'ān says

"... And (remember) when Abraham said: ` My Lord, make this a secure City "

As it was pointed out in the previous verse, Allah accepted this invocation from Abraham (a.s.) and set this Holy land as a secure center, both outward and inward .security

:His second petition was thus

and provide its people with fruits such of them that believe in Allah and the Last ..." "...'.Day

It is interesting that Abraham (a.s.) requested ` security ' first, and then he asked for material gifts which itself is a reference to the fact that a safe and sound economic .status is not possible unless there exists security in a town or country

The opinions are divided amongst the commentators as to the

meaning of the term ` fruits ' here. On the whole, it seems that the word has a vast meaning, so broad that it includes any material bounty whether it is fruits or other .nutritious substances, as well as spiritual bounties

Concerning the meaning of this term in the above verse, Imam Ṣādiq (a.s.) in a tradition has said: " It is the fruits of hearts."(١) This indicates that Allah attracts the .attention and affection of human beings to the people of this Holy land

This is also noteworthy, that Abraham (a.s.) invocates this petition only for the believers in Allah, the only True God, and the Last Day, because he might have realized from the statement: " My covenant does not include the unjust," cited in the former verse, the fact that some groups of his future offspring would follow the path of polytheism and injustice; then, to show reverence in a courteous

Allah's answer

.manner, here, he did not include them in his petition

:However, Allah's answer to this invocation of Abraham (a.s.) was

"... ,He said: ` And whoever disbelieves, I shall let him enjoy himself for a little while ..."

" ' ! then I shall drive him to the Punishment of Fire and an evil destination it is..."

This is, in fact, the same ` General Mercy ' of Allah by which His unlimited bounties are available to all creatures so that good doers and evildoers equally enjoy from His vast bountiful Table in this world, but in the next world, where His ` Specific Mercy ' comes forth, wrongdoers will have no share of it and also they will have no way to rescue .themselves

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Bihar-ul-Anwar, vol. ١٢, pp.٨۶ and ١٠٠ ١ -١

۱۲۷ وَ اِذْ یَرْفَعُ اِبْرهیمُ الْقَواعِدَ مِنَ الْبَیْتِ وَ اِسْمعیلُ رَبَّنا تَقَبَّلْ مِنّا اِنَّکَ اَنْتَ السَّمیعُ الْعَلیمُ

۱۲۸ رَبَّنا وَاجْعَلْنا مُسْلِمَیْنِ لَکَ وَ مِنْ ذُرِّیَّتِنا اُمَّهً مُسْلِمَهً لَکَ وَ اَرِنا مَناسِکَنا وَتُبْ عَلَیْنآ اِنَّ-کَ اَنْتَ التَّ-وّابُ ال-رَّحی--مُ

۱۲۹ رَبَّنا وَابْعَثْ فیهِمْ رَسُولاً مِنْهُمْ یَتْلُوا عَلَیْهِمْ ایاتِکَ وَ یُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْکِتابَ وَ الْحِکْمَهَ وَ یُزَکّیهِمْ اِنَّکَ اَنْتَ الْعَزیزُ الْحَکیمُ

۱۲۷. " And (remember) when Abraham and Ismail raised up the foundations of the House; (saying): ` Our Lord, accept (this service) from us; for surely You are All-Hearing, All-Knowing'."

۱۲۸. " ` Our Lord, make us submissive (Muslims) to You, and of our progeny an Ummah (a nation) submissive to You, and show us our ways of worship, and turn to us (mercifully); for surely You are the Oft-Returning, the Most Merciful '."

۱۲۹. " ` Our Lord, send amongst them an Apostle of their own who shall recite unto them Your revelations, teach them the Book and the Wisdom, and purify them; for surely You are Almighty, All-Wise '."

Commentary : Verses ۱۲۷-۱۲۹

The Structure of the House of Ka`bah

It is clearly understood from the numerous verses of the Qur'ān, the Islamic traditions, and some historical records that the House of Ka`bah had been founded before Abraham (a.s.) and that it had been

established at the time of Adam (a.s.). Sura Ibrāhīm, No. ١۴, verse

quoting from the tongue of Abraham (a.s.), says: " Our Lord ! Surely I have settled a ,٣٧ "... ,part of my offspring in a valley unproductive (of fruit) near Your Sacred House

This verse confirms that when Abraham (a.s.) with his wife and his infant son Ismail arrived at the Holy land of Mecca, there was no sign of the Ka`bah seen therein, but .he was guided there by Divine inspiration

Another verse says: " The first House (of worship) appointed for men was that at .(Bakka: full of blessing..." (Sura 'Āl-i-`Imrān, No. ٣, verse٩۶

It is certain that the worshipping of Allah and the structure of the center of adoration .(.did not begin from the time of Abraham (a.s

.(.It had started before that and was established at the time of Adam (a.s

The idea mentioned in the verse under discussion indicates the same meaning, too. It :says

And (remember) when Abraham and Ismail raised up the foundations of the House; " (saying): ` Our Lord, accept (this service) from us; for surely You are All-Hearing, All-".'Knowing

This statement refers to the concept that the foundations of the Ka`bah had existed .from before, and Abraham (a.s.) and Ismail (a.s.) raised them up

Hadrat Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (a.s.) in one of his sermons known as Qāṣi`ah also says: " Do you not see that Allah, the Glorified, has tried all the people among those who came before, beginning with Adam, up to the last ones in this world with stones... He made those stones into His Sacred House... Then He commanded Adam and his sons (to turn their attention towards it. ..."(١

.(.The Ka`bah originally built by Adam (a.s

In short, the verses of the Qur'ān and the Islamic narrations confirm this historical

fact that the House of Ka`bah was originally built by Adam (a.s.). Then during the Flood at the time of Noah, it fell down. Then, later, it was rebuilt by the hands of .(.Abraham (a.s.) with the aid of his son Ismail (a.s

The second of the above two verses attests to the fact that Abraham (a.s.) and his son Ismail (a.s.) sought from Allah five

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Nahjul-Balaqah, Sermon ۱۹۲ ۱ -۱

important invocations. These prayers, which were offered when they were busy building the Ka`bah, are so exact and consistent with all the necessities of material and spiritual life, that they can lead man to the recognition of the magnificence of the .souls of these two great Apostles of Allah

Abraham (a.s) and Ismail's (a.s) Invocations

:At first, Abraham (a.s.) prays

"... ,Our Lord, make us submissive (Muslims) to You ` "

"... ,Then he invocates: "...and of our progeny an Ummah (a nation) submissive to You

He continues saying: "... and show us our ways of worship, ..." (so that we can adore .(You in a way worthy of Your Highness

:After that, he (a.s.) seeks Allah for repentance, thus

and turn to us (mercifully); for surely You are the Oft-Returning, the Most Merciful ..." "!

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The fifth invocation, which was sought from Allah at the time of constructing the Holy :Ka`bah by Abraham and Ismail (a.s.), is this

"... Our Lord, send amongst them an Apostle of their own ` "

who shall recite unto them Your revelations, teach them the Book and the Wisdom, ..." "... ;and purify them

".for surely You are Almighty, All-Wise..."

****

۱۳۰ وَ مَنْ يَرْغَبُ عَنْ مِلَّةِ اِبْرٰهيمَ اِلّاٰ مَنْ سَفِهَ نَفْسَهُ وَ لَقَ-دِ اصْطَفَيْن-اهُ فِ-ى الدُّنْى-ا وَ اِنَّ-هُ فِ-ى الْاٰخِ-رَهِ لَمِ-نَ الصّالِحى-نَ

۱۳۱ اِذْ قالَ لَ-هُ رَبُّ-هُ اَسْلِمْ قالَ اَسْلَمْتُ لِ-رَبِّ الْعالَمى-نَ

۱۳۲ وَ وَصّى بِها اِبْرٰهيمُ بَنيهِ وَ يَعْقُوبُ يا بَنِيَّ اِنَّ اللّهَ اصْطَفى لَكُمُ الدّينَ فَلا تَمُوتُنَّ اِلّاٰ وَ اَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ

۱۳۰. " And who turns away from Abraham's creed but he who makes a fool of himself ? Indeed, We chose him in this world, and in the Hereafter surely he shall be among the righteous."

۱۳۱. " When his Lord said to him, ` Submit ', he said,

` I have submitted to the Lord of all worlds'."

۱۳۲. " And this did Abraham bequeath to his sons, and (so did) Jacob, ` My children, Allah has chosen for you the Faith, therefore die not unless you are Muslims'."

Commentary : Verses ۱۳۰-۱۳۲

Abraham (a.s.), a Human Prototype

In the former verses, Abraham's personality was partly introduced.

Some of his services and quite a few of his comprehensive invocations, which included material and spiritual aspects, were discussed.

From the totality of these words, it is concluded that this great Apostle can be a good model for all the truth-seekers throughout the world, and his school of thought can be an instruction guideline for all human beings.

Based on this very matter, in the first verse of the above verses, it says:

" And who turns away from Abraham's creed but he who makes a fool of himself? ..."

Is this not foolishness that one forsakes such a pure brilliant creed

and goes astray along the misleading paths of polytheism, blasphemy, and corruption? This is a religion which is appropriate for and coinciding with the soul and nature of man. It is a process that parallels wisdom and logic. This creed is beneficial .for man both in the present world and the next world

Then, it adds: "... Indeed, We chose him in this world, and in the Hereafter surely he ".will be among the righteous

Yes, Abraham (a.s.) is chosen by Allah, and he is among the ranks of the righteous and .that is why he should be chosen as a model

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Abraham's (a.s) Submission

The next verse, as an emphasis, refers to one of the other outstanding qualities which .is, in fact, the origin of the rest of his qualities

,When his Lord said to him, ` Submit ', he said "

".'I have submitted to the Lord of all worlds `

Yes, it is when Abraham (a.s.), that pure true believer and self-sacrificer, hearkens to the call of his innate nature that the Lord enjoins him ` Submit ', and he submits .himself totally to His command

Abraham (a.s.) sees that the stars, the moon, and the sun, all in all, have precise settings. Then he, with his mind and perception finds out that they are subject to the regulations of creation. Therefore, he proclaims that none of them can be his Lord, and he says: " For me, I have set my face firmly and truly, towards Him Who created the heavens and the earth, and never shall I give partners to God." (Sura Al-An`ām, .(No. ۶, verse ۷۹

Worthiness, the Byproduct of Purity and Sincerity

In fact, the first step to attaining worthiness for a person is through purity and

sincerity, and it was owing to this same quality in Abraham (a.s.) that he was able to submit exclusively to the command of Allah, therefore He was pleased with him and chose him, and for this same reason He selected him to introduce His religion.

The entirety of Abraham's (a.s.) deeds, throughout his life, from beginning up to the end, were unique. One of his expressions of faith was through his challenge with idol worshippers and star worshippers. Another was when, while in the midst of fire, he showed such strength

of faith that his hostile enemy, Nimrod, was so affected by him that he unwillingly said: " If a person wants to take a god, he should take one similar to the God of Abraham ((a.s.)." (١

Also, bringing his wife and suckling son to that hot dry land, i.e. the Holy land, building the House of Ka`bah, and taking his beloved son into the place of sacrifice, each was .an example of the resoluteness of his manner

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Abraham's (a.s.) bequest to his children

Abraham's (a.s.) bequest to his children at the last moments of his life was also a :model, as the last verse of the verses under discussion says

"... ,And this did Abraham bequeath to his sons, and (so did) Jacob "

Each of them told their sons: "... ` My children, Allah has chosen for you the Faith, ".'therefore die not unless you are Muslims

It seems that the Qur'ān by stating the bequest of Abraham (a.s.) intends to reiterate the fact that you human beings are not only responsible for your children while they are with you but you are responsible for their futures, too. When you are on your deathbed, do not think of only your financial affairs and that of your children after .your death; you had better think about their spiritual life, too

Not only did Abraham (a.s.) bequeath such a testament, but also his grandson, Jacob (a.s.), imitated Abraham's same manner and at the last moments of his life enjoined his children to attain the secret of victory, success and happiness via this short .'phrase: ` Submit to the Lord of the worlds

The mentioning of Jacob from among all prophets, here in this verse, is perhaps with the aim of telling the Jews and Christians, who each in their own way used to join themselves to Jacob, that the blasphemic creeds which they followed and the lack of pure submission in the Truth that they showed by their actions, did not coincide with

.the manner of the one whom they joined themselves to

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p:۳۰۷

Al-Kafi, vol. ۸, p. ۳۶۸, narration ۵۵۹ ۱ -۱

Verses ۱۳۳-۱۳۴

۱۳۳ اَمْ کُنْتُمْ شُـهَداءَ اِذْ حَضَـرَیَعْقُوبَ الْمَوْتُ اِذْ قالَ لِبَنیهِ ما تَعْبُـدُونَ مِنْ بَعْـدی قالُوا نَعْبُـدُ اِلهَکَ وَ اِلهَ ابائِکَ اِبْرهیمَ وَ اِسْـمعیلَ وَ
اِسْحقَ اِلهـًا واحِداً وَ نَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ

۱۳۴ تِلْکَ اُمَّهٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ لَها ما کَسَبَتْ وَ لَکُمْ ما کَسَبْتُمْ وَ لا تُسْئَلُونَ عَمّا کانُوا یَعْمَلُونَ

۱۳۳. " Nay, were you witnesses when death approached Jacob ?

When he said to his sons:

` What will you worship after me ? ' They said:

` We will worship your God and the God of your forefathers Abraham, Ismail and Isaac, the One (true) God (alone) and to Him we do submit '."

۱۳۴. " That is a nation that has passed away; theirs is that which they have earned, and yours is what you have earned; you shall not be questioned for what they had been doing."

Occasion of Revelation

A group of the Jews believed that when Jacob (a.s) was on his deathbed, he enjoined on his children the same religion which the Jews currently believe in (with all its corruption of the scriptures). For the nullification of their belief, Allah sent down this verse.

Commentary:

Everyone is Responsible for his Own Deeds

Point

As it is also understood from the apparent meaning of the verse,

there were some rejectors of Islam who falsely charged Jacob (a.s.), the prophet of Allah, regarding this matter. (The matter was mentioned in the description of the (.occasion of revelation

:To reject this false claim, the Qur'ān says

:"...? Nay, were you witnesses when death approached Jacob "

?Were you there when he frankly questioned his children the way he did

.Yes, that which you (Jews) charge Jacob (a.s.) with is not true

:The factual account which occurred was that

"...' ? When he said to his sons: ` What will you worship after me..."

They said: ` We will worship your God and the God of your forefathers Abraham,..." ".' Ismail and Isaac, the One (true) God (alone) and to Him we do submit

Yes, he did not enjoined them with anything but to believe in monotheism and to submit to the command of Allah, which is the root of submission to all the Divine .ordinances

It can be deduced from this verse that when Jacob was on his deathbed, a feeling of anxiety and worry existed in him about the future of his children. Finally he expressed his anxiety and asked his sons what they would worship after him. He especially asked ` what (thing) ' and he did not ask ` whom ', because there were some idol-worshippers in the locale who used to prostrate before some particular ` things '. Jacob wanted to know whether there was any tendency towards those beliefs in the depths of their hearts. But when he heard his children's answer, he found, again, his .peace of mind

This is also noteworthy that Ismail (a.s.) was not Jacob's father or forefather, but he was Jacob's uncle, whereas in the verse under discussion, the term / 'ābā' / which is the plural of the word / 'ab / (father) has been applied. This makes it clear that, in the Arabic language, this word was sometimes used for ` uncle '. Hence, we say that if

this word has been used regarding 'Āzar in the Qur'ān, it does not negate the fact that .'Āzar was Abraham's uncle, not his father

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The last of the above verses mentioned is an answer to one of the delusions of the Jews. They emphasized very much on their ancestors

.and the honour and glory they ascribed themselves in relation to Allah

They imagined that even when they tainted themselves with sin, they could be :rescued under the comforting shade of such ancestors. Then, the Qur'ān says

That is a nation that has passed away; theirs is that which they have earned, and " "...;yours is what you have earned

,And, in the same way that they are not responsible for your deeds, also

".you shall not be questioned for what they had been doing ..."

Improve your own Faith and deeds

Therefore, instead of expending all your energy trying to prove that you, by right of ancestry, deserve the honour and high position that your pure ancestors enjoyed, you .should try to improve your own Faith and deeds

The addressees in this verse are apparently the Jews and ` the People of the Book ', but it is evident that this statement is not specifically referring to them alone, in that .this basic principle, pertains to us Muslims, too

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Verses ۱۳۵-۱۳۷

۱۳۵ وَ قالُوا كُونُوا هُودًا اَوْ نَصارى تَهْتَدُوا قُلْ بَلْ مِلَّةَ اِبْرهيمَ حَنيفًا وَ ما كانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكينَ

۱۳۶ قُولُوا امَنّا بِاللّهِ وَ ما اُنْزِلَ اِلَيْنا وَ ما اُنْزِلَ اِلى اِبْرهيمَ وَ اِسْمعيلَ وَ اِسْحقَ وَ يَعْقُوبَ وَ الْاَسْباطِ وَ ما اُوتِىَ مُوسى وعيسى وَ ما
اُوتِىَ النَّبِيُّونَ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ لا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ اَحَدٍ مِنْهُمْ وَ نَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ

۱۳۷ فَاِنْ امَنُوا بِمِثْلِ ما امَنْتُمْ بِهِ فَقَدِ اهْتَدَوْا وَ اِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَاِنَّماهُمْ فى شِقاقٍ فَسَيَكْفيكَهُمُ اللّهُ وَ هُوَ السَّميعُ الْعَلى-مُ

.' And they said: ` Be Jews or Christians, you shall be guided aright " .۱۳۵

;Say: ` Nay ! Rather the creed of Abraham, the upright

".' and he was not of those who associate partners to Allah

Say: ` We have believed in Allah and that which has been sent down " .۱۳۶

to us, and (in) what was sent down to

;Abraham, Ismail, Isaac, Jacob and the tribes

and (in) that which was given to Moses and Jesus

.and (in) that which was given to all prophets from their Lord

".' We make no distinction between any of them, and to Him do we submit

,If then they believe in what you believe " .۱۳۷

,they indeed are guided (aright); but if they turn away

;then they are clearly in schism; Allah will suffice you against them

".He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing

Occasion of Revelation

Upon the occasion of revelation of these verses it is narrated fromIbn Abbas that some of the Jewish scholars and some Christians from

Najrān were disputing with the Muslims. Each of these two groups considered their own creed more superior than the other's regarding the Truth, then they negated each other. The Jews said that their prophet, Moses (a.s.), was superior and their Book, the Turah, was the best. The Christians, on the other hand, had the same claim. They said Jesus (a.s.) was the best guide and the Evangel was the best among the heavenly Books. Even though they could not settle their own disputes between themselves, the followers of both creeds invited the Muslims to their own religion. The above verses were revealed and answered them both.

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Commentary:

Only Our Creed is True!

Point

Egoism and self-conceit usually cause one to think that Truth is exclusively his own and therefore, he considers others wrong. This very person, consequently, tries to divert others to his own way of seeing things, as the Qur'ān through the first verse of the above verses says:

"And they said: ` Be Jews or Christians, you shall be guided aright.' ... "

Tell them that distorted religions can never be the source of guidance, but:

"... Say: ` Nay! Rather the creed of Abraham, the upright; and he was not of those who associate partners to Allah.' "

How to recognize the Pure Religion

The true believers in pure Faith are those who follow the pure Monotheistic creed, i.e. the Monotheism which has never been tainted with any form of polytheism. The most important basic principle for recognizing the pure religion from the corrupted ones is by keeping in mind this very perfect creed of Monotheism.

Islam instructs us not to make distinction between the divine prophets and to respect their religions totally because the fundamental principles of all Divine religions are entirely the same. Moses (a.s.) and Jesus (a.s.) reinstituted the pure (ḥanīf) doctrine of Abraham (a.s.),

which is to live and die with faith in the One True God. They believed in the non-polytheistic creed of Abraham (a.s.), the pure Monotheist, although their religions were later contaminated with polytheism by their ignorant followers. The Jews, though they taught Unity, went after false gods, and the Christians invented the trinity or borrowed it from pagans. (Of course, if they search for the pureness of truth, they will realize that there is no difference between what their prophets preached and what was brought forth by Islam and that they, in performing their duties today, should follow the divine creed of Islam which has come down from the direction of Allah for this Age).

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Concerning the statements of the Muslims' opponents, the next verse enjoins the followers of Islam thus:

" Say: ` We have believed in Allah and that which has been sent down

to us, and (in) what was sent down to Abraham, Ismail, Isaac,

Jacob and the tribes; and (in) that which was given

to Moses and Jesus and (in) that which was given

to all prophets from their Lord. ... "

"... We make no distinction between any of them, and to Him do we submit '."

Accepting All Prophets of Allah

Self-conceit and tribal or racial prejudices should never lie at the root of our accepting some of the prophets and rejecting the others. They were all Divine teachers who spent their lives training and guiding people in different eras of time. Their aim was only to guide human beings towards pure Unity, Truth, and Justice, although each of them had some particular duties and special qualifications related to their own specific periods of time.

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: Then it adds

"... ;(If then they believe in what you believe, they indeed are guided (aright "

"...;but if they turn away, then they are clearly in schism ..."

p:٣١٣

If they do not mix their racial and tribal problems, and the likes of them, with the religion, and formally accept all the prophets, they are also guided, otherwise they have put away the truth and followed the wrong.

The term / šiqāq / originally means ` cleft, conflict, and fight ' and, here, it has been rendered into ` blasphemy ', and sometimes into `misleading ', or ` separation from Truth and tending to falsehood ', all of which, in fact, basically point back to the same fact.

Some of the commentators have cited that when the former verse was revealed whereby Jesus (a.s.) was mentioned in a row with some other prophets, some of the Christians said that they did not agree with that statement because Jesus (a.s.) was not like other prophets; he was the son of God. The last verse of the above verses was sent down(١) and warned them that they were misguided and they were in schism.

However, at the end of the verse, it encourages the Muslims not to be afraid of the plots of enemies; saying:

"... Allah will suffice you against them; He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing."

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Explanation:

The Oneness of the Prophets' Invitation

In several occasions, the Holy Qur'ān points out that there is no difference between the prophets of Allah because all of them had received the revelation from one single Source and pursued one goal. Therefore, the Qur'ān enjoins the Muslims to respect all of the Divine prophets equally. But, as it was stated before, this exhortation does not conflict with the idea that every new religion sent down from Allah abrogates the former religions and Islam is the last religion in the world.

Of course, no religion on earth, except Islam, has ever demanded of its adherents to

believe equally in the truthfulness and flawless godliness, sinless purity of conduct and character of the other apostles

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Majma`-ul-Bayān, vol. ۱, p. ۲۱۸ ۱ -۱

of Allah and in the other sacred scripts as the revealed Word of Allah. This command in Islam was given because the Divine Apostles were like some teachers and every one of them instructed the human race as one class. It is evident that when the period and the course of one class finishes, the trainees will be promoted to another teacher, to a class of a higher degree. Therefore, all nations are to fulfill the requirements given by the last prophet of their times, which is the last stage of the development of the religion in their period of time. This statement will never contrast the rightfulness .of the invitations of other prophets

? ' Who were ` Asbāt

The term / sebt / originally means: ` stretching, or expanding of something easily '. A tree is sometimes called ` sabat ' because its branches expand freely. The leading lexicologists expressly declare that / sebt / the plural of which is / asbāt / includes sons' (children and daughters' children.(١)

The meaning of the term / asbāt /, here, is the groups and tribes of Israelites who came forth from Jacob's twelve sons, and, since there were some prophets among them, in the above verse they are counted among those upon whom the Divine .verses have been sent down

So, the objective meaning of the term, here, is the tribe of Israelites or the tribes of Jacob's children who consisted of some prophets, not all the children of Jacob. Some of those children were not entirely eligible to be prophets because they committed sin .in their dealings with their own brother

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/ The meaning of / ḥanīf

The Arabic term / ḥanīf / is based on / ḥanaf / with the meaning ` orthodox, true ', or ` inclined from misguidance to right opinion '. So, those pure monotheists who turn away from polytheism and incline to

.' this basic principle, are called ` Ḥanīf

.' It is also for this reason that one of the meanings of / ḥanīf / is ` true, straight

This explanation makes it clear that the meaning offered by the commentators for the term / ḥanīf / such as Hajj, the pilgrimage to the Ka`bah, adhering to truth, following Abraham (a.s.), and the pureness of deeds, are all reflections of that inclusive .meaning and each of them is an example of it

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Verses ۱۳۸-۱۴۱; Arabic and English Translation

۱۳۸ صِبْغَةَ اللّهِ وَ مَنْ اَحْسَنُ مِنَ اللّهِ صِبْغَةً وَ نَحْنُ لَهُ عابِدُونَ

۱۳۹ قُلْ اَتُحاجُّونَنا فِی اللّهِ وَ هُوَ رَبُّنا وَ رَبُّکُمْ وَ لَنا اَعْمالُنا وَ لَکُمْ اَعْمالُکُمْ وَ نَحْنُ لَهُ مُخْلِصُونَ

۱۴۰ اَمْ تَقُولُونَ اِنَّ اِبْرهیمَ وَ اِسْمعیلَ وَ اِسْحقَ وَ یَعْقُوبَ وَ الْاَسْباطَ کانُوا هُودًا اَوْ نَصارى قُلْ ءَاَنْتُمْ اَعْلَمُ اَمِ اللّهُ وَ مَنْ اَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ
کَتَمَ شَهادَةً عِنْدَهُ مِنَ اللّهِ وَ مَا اللّهُ بِغافِلٍ عَمّا تَعْمَلُونَ

۱۴۱ تِلْکَ اُمَّةٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ لَها ما کَسَبَتْ وَ لَکُمْ ما کَسَبْتُمْ وَ لا تُسْئَلُونَ عَمّا کانُوا یَعْمَلُونَ

۱۳۸. " (Receive) the baptism of Allah and who is better than Allah in baptizing? And Him do we worship."

۱۳۹. " Say (to the Jews and Christians): ` Would you dispute with us concerning Allah Who is our Lord and your Lord? For us are our deeds and for you are your deeds: and we are sincere to Him.' "

۱۴۰. " Or do you claim that Abraham, Ismail, Isaac, Jacob, and the tribes were Jews or Christians? Say: ` Who then knows best, you or Allah? ' Who is more unjust than he who conceals testimony received from Allah? And Allah is not heedless of what you do."

۱۴۱. " That is a nation that has passed away; theirs is that which they have earned and yours is what you earned; you shall not be questioned for what they had been doing."

p:۳۱۷

:Commentary

The Baptism of Allah

Following the invitation, in the former verses, to the adherents of all religions to accept the Divine messages of all prophets, in the first verse of this group of verses, it :commands them all to

"... Receive) the baptism of Allah) "

Which is the same as the purification by Faith and true monotheism resulting in the :manifestation of one true colour. Then, it adds

".and who is better than Allah in baptizing? And Him do we worship ..."

Thus, the Qur'ān commands that all racial, tribal and other separative colours be put .aside and that every one take on (symbolically) the colour of Allah

Some commentators have recorded that it was a custom among the Christians to baptize their new-born children in baptismal water which was mixed with dye or a colour, signifying that the baptized person received new colour in life. They said that this baptism, especially with this particular colour, caused the person to be cleaned .(.from the original sin that he had inherited from Adam (a.s

The Qur'ān rejects this baseless logic and tells them that in order to purify their souls and minds from any stain of sin instead of using colours of rituals, superstitions and .dispersiveness, they had better accept the colour of truthfulness and godliness

Truly, what a delicate and beautiful sentence it is! How nice it would be if all people accepted the godly colour, i.e. the colour of unity, purity and virtue! Viz the colour of colourlessness, the colour of justice, equality, patience and perseverance. Under the light of the colour of unity and sincerity, all conflicts and fights can be put to an end .and the main weed of polytheism and dispersion might be rooted out

.This is, in fact, that very colournessless, or in other words, pulling away of all colours

In several traditions, commenting on this verse, it is narrated from Imam Ṣādiq (a.s.) who has said that the objective meaning of /ṣibqatallah / ` the baptism of Allah ' is the .pure creed of Islam.(١) This idea is also a reference to what was said in the above

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Nu-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. ١, p. ١٣٢ ١ -١

Some of the Jews, and some others, occasionally disputed with the Muslims claiming that all the prophets were chosen from among them and their religion was the oldest of all religions, and their book was the most ancient of Divine Books. They said that if Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) had really been a prophet, he would have been appointed from among them. They sometimes said that their race was superior to the Arab race, for the acceptance of creeds, and they were more receptive to revelation than Arabs, .because they had practically been idol-worshippers while the Jews were not

The Jews considered themselves the sons of God, the ones who claimed Heaven exclusively theirs. The Qur'ān refuses all of these false imaginations. At first, it tells :(.the Prophet (p.b.u.h

Say (to the Jews and Christians): ` Would you dispute with us concerning Allah Who " "... ?is our Lord and your Lord

This Lord is not exclusively for one particular tribe or a certain race. He is the Lord of .all human beings and all creatures in the world of existence

Addressing them, it adds that they should also know that: there are no privileges for :anyone except for those attained by a person's good deeds

"... :For us are our deeds and for you are your deeds ..."

But there is a difference between those deeds. We serve Him sincerely and associate :(none with Him, (while most of you have poluted Unity with polytheism

".' and we are sincere to Him..."

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Prophets before Moses (a.s), neither Jews nor Christians

:The next verse replies to some other vain claims of theirs. It says

Or do you claim that Abraham, Ismail, Isaac, Jacob, and the tribes were Jews or " "...?Christians

"...' ?Say: ` Who then knows best, you or Allah ..."

.Allah knows best of all that they were neither Jewish nor Christian

You also know, whether you admit it or not, that many of those prophets came in to this world before Moses (a.s.) and Jesus (a.s.), and

p:۳۱۹

if you do not know it, then you have ignorantly charged them with such a belie which :in itself, is a great sin and an attempt at hiding the true fact. Thus

"... ?Who is more unjust than he who conceals testimony received from Allah ..."

".And Allah is not heedless of what you do ..."

What a wonder! When it happens that a person's mind is dominated by obstinacy and prejudice, he denies even the well-known facts of history. For instance, the Jews counted the prophets such as Abraham (a.s.), Isaac (a.s.) and Jacob (a.s.), who came into the world and passed away before Moses and Jesus, as being from among the followers of Moses (a.s.) and Jesus (a.s.). They denied the above mentioned fact which is pertinent to the fate of their people and defines their Faith and religion. It may be for this very reason that the Qur'ān introduces them as the most unjust. There is no unjust action worst than that some persons intentionally deny some facts in order to .misguide people so that they wander aimlessly in that misguidance

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Thrive on Your Own Excellencies

In the last of the verses under discussion, which is also the last verse of the first part (out of the thirty parts) of the Holy Qur'ān, the Qur'ān answers them in another style :indicating that supposing all these claims were correct, then, this is the answer

"...That is a nation that has passed away; theirs is that which they have earned "

and yours is what you earned; you shall not be questioned for what they had been..." ".doing

In conclusion, a nation should rely upon its own deeds, not on its past history. As a .person should thrive on his own excellencies, not on those of his ancestors

The End Part One

The End Part One

Beginning of Part Two

(Part Two (١

١۴٢ سَيَقُولُ السُّفَهاءُ مِنَ النّاسِ ما وَلّيهُمْ عَنْ قِبْلَتِهِمُ الَّتى كانُوا عَلَيْها قُلْ لِلّهِ الْمَشْرِقُ وَ الْمَغْرِبُ يَهْ-دى مَ-نْ يَش-اءُ اِل-ى صِ-راطٍ مُسْتَقى-مٍ

The fools among the people will say: ` What has turned them from their Qiblah " .١۴٢ '.(direction of prayer) which they were facing at

;Say: ` Allah's is the East and the West

".' He guides whoever He pleases to a straight way

Commentary : Verse ١۴٢

Occasion of the Change of Qiblah

This verse together with a few verses following it refers to one of the great happenings in the history of Islam which caused a huge wave of excitement among the people of that time. The explanation for the occurrence is that the Prophet of Islam (p.b.u.h.), under divine direction, prayed towards the direction of Jerusalem for thirteen years in Mecca after proclaiming his mission and then, also, for several months in Medina after his migration. But again, under divine direction, the Qiblah (i.e. the direction of prayer) was changed and Muslims were commissioned to pray .towards the Ka`bah

The commentators are divided as to the length of time that Muslims worshipped facing towards Jerusalem in Medina. The duration of this ritual situation has been cited from seven to seventeen months. However, during this period, Muslims were always entangled with the reproaches of the Jews, because Jerusalem was originally the Jewish

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The commentary of the First Part of the Holy Qur'an ended on the previous page, -١

but verses about the theme of Qiblah in the Qur'an is still continued. Hence, to complete the idea, we had to add some verses of Part ۲, here, at the end of this .volume

Qiblah. Since the Muslims used to pray towards the direction of Jerusalem, the Jewish Qiblah, during that time, they blamed that their (Muslims) acceptance of their (Jewish) Qiblah proved, as they thought, that the Jews were right in their creed and Muslims, .who were not independent for themselves in the direction of prayer, were not

These statements were difficult for the Prophet of Islam (p.b.u.h.) and Muslims to bear. They were, on one hand, showing obedience to the command of Allah, and, on the other hand, the ceaseless sarcasm of the Jews was intolerable. It was for this reason that by night Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) occasionally turned his face towards the heavens in a way that showed he was expecting to receive Divine .revelation

After some time of waiting, finally the command for changing the Qiblah was revealed. It was while the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) was praying the noon prayer and he had already performed only two rak`ats of the prayer in Banī-Sālim Mosque towards the direction of Jerusalem when Gabriel was commissioned by Allah to take the arm of .the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) and turn his face towards the direction of the Ka`bah

The Jews were annoyed with this occurrence and according to their old traditional style, they began seeking pretexts. Aforetime, they used to say that they were superior to Muslims because Muslims were dependent on the Jews regarding their Qiblah. But, when the command of changing the Qiblah was sent down by the Lord, a :party of the Jews protested; as the Qur'ān says

The fools among the people will say: ` What has turned them from their Qiblah " "...' ? (direction of prayer) which they were facing at

The Jews disputed about why the Muslims altered the former prophets' Qiblah that day. They said if the first Qiblah was correct, then why the change? And, if the second one was right, then why had they been praying towards the direction of Jerusalem for ?more than thirteen years

:The Lord ordered His Apostle thus

Say: ` Allah's is the East and the West; He guides whoever He pleases to a straight..."
".' way

Similar to this circumstance the words East and West, besides the verse under :discussion, have occured in four other verses of the Qur'ān

There is a short explanation about their .۹ :۷۳ ,۲۸ :۲۶ ,۱۷۷ :۲ ,۱۱۵ :۲

p:۳۲۲

objective meaning when commenting on verse ۱۱۵ (pg. ۲۶۷ this vol.). The content meaning of these terms refers to the Omnipresence of Allah as the Absolute Reality, the hold of which penetrates the universe in its every part and particle as well as its whole, meaning both the rise of the light in the East and its setting in the West are the various aspects of manifestation of Allah's Mighty and Glory i.e., whichever direction .the mind turns there is this aspect of His

This verse was a decisive clear reasonable answer for those who sought pretext by letting them know that Jerusalem, the Ka`bah and all other places belong to Allah, and, intrinsically, Allah has no house and no place; He is the Omnipresent. The main principle here is that we servants should submit to His command and whatever direction He appoints for prayer, that direction is sacred and respectable and that direction should be prayed towards. Without His commission, no place has excellence .or preference in its own essence

And, the change of the Qiblah, in fact, is one stage of the many different stages of trial and development, each of which is an example of Divine Guidance. It is He Who .' guides people to the ` Straight Path

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۱۴۳ وَ كَذلِكَ جَعَلْناكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطاً لِتَكُونُوا شُهَداءَ عَلَى النّاسِ وَ يَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهيداً وَ ما جَعَلْنَا الْقِبْلَةَ الَّتى كُنْتَ عَلَيْها
اِلاّ لِنَعْلَمَ مَنْ يَتَّبِعُ الرَّسُولَ مِمَّنْ يَنْقَلِبُ عَلى عَقِبَيْهِ وَ اِنْ كانَتْ لَكَبيرَةً اِلاّ عَلَى الَّذينَ هَدَى اللّهُ وَ ما كانَ اللّهُ لِيُضيعَ ايمانَكُمْ اِنَّ اللّهَ
بِالنّاسِ لَرَؤُفٌ رَحيمٌ

۱۴۳. " And thus have We made you an Ummat of middling stand that you may be witnesses over mankind, and the Messenger may be (a) witness over you. We did not make the (former) Qiblah (direction of prayer) towards which you were facing at, except that We might distinguish him who follows the Messenger from him who turns back upon his heels; it was indeed hard except for those whom Allah has guided. Allah would never let your Faith be wasted truly Allah is to mankind Most Affectionate, Most Merciful."

Commentary : Verse ۱۴۳

An Ummat of Middle Standing

In this verse a part of the philosophy and secret of the change of the Qiblah is referred to.

At first it says:

" And thus have We made you an Ummat of middling stand..."

A nation that is a medium one from any aspect, viz. it is in a state that is neither in excess nor defect and can be brought forth as an example.

But, why is the Muslims' Qiblah a middle one? Haply, it is

because most of the Christians were living in countries west of their Qiblah. In order to stand towards the direction of the birthplace of Jesus which was located in Jerusalem they had to stand nearly towards the direction of the East. Therefore the East was considered the direction of their Qiblah. The Jews, who mostly were living in Syria, Babylon and the like, prayed towards Jerusalem which was located nearly in the West for them. Hence, the West was considered the direction of their Qiblah. But, for the Muslims of that time (Muslims in Medina), the Ka`bah was located in the South, .between the East and the West which, thereby, was considered a middle ground

All of those meanings, in fact, are understood from the phrase /wakaôālika/ ` and thus ' stated in the verse. The Qur'ān, however, apparently, may intend to refer to the position of all Islamic programs and that not only the Muslims' Qiblah is middle .standing but also in all other aspects they have this specialty

:Then, it adds

that you may be witnesses over mankind, and the Messenger may be (a) witness..." "... .over you

The expression of the Muslims being ` witnesses ' over the people of the world, and the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) bearing ` witness ' over the Muslims may be an insinuation to ` being as a model ', since witnesses are always chosen from the eligible ones. Thus, the purpose might be that you (Muslims), with these instructions and this creed, are a .model nation, as the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) is a model among you

You, by your deeds and behaviour bear witness that a man can be both a man of action and a man of religion while he is living in this very world. He, being sociable, can quite properly protect the limits of his spiritual and moral aspects. Portraying these thoughts and activities, you bear witness that not only there is no contradictions between religion and science, or the present world and the coming world, but they .serve one another

Then, the Qur'ān has pointed to one of the secrets of the change of the Qiblah when it :says

(We did not make the (former) Qiblah (direction of prayer..."

,towards which you were facing at

except that We might distinguish him who

p:۳۲۵

"... ;follows the Messenger from him who turns back upon his heels

It is interesting that the Qur'ān does not say: ` him who follows you ' but it says: ` him who follows the Messenger ' which confirms the fact that you (Muhammad) are commissioned by the Lord and you are a guide. So, they must be obedient to your command in all things. In this relation, the change of the Qiblah is simple; if the command were beyond that, it should be obeyed and their seeking pretext in it is a .sign of their holding on to the customs of the age of paganism and idol worshipping

" The Qurānic phrase " from him who turns back upon his heels

which originally means ` to turn on ones heel ' is a hint to a kind of retrograde manner .or retrogression

"... .it was indeed hard except for those whom Allah has guided ..."

Yes, the soul of absolute submission to the command of Allah will not come to being unless there is Divine Guidance. This is an important matter, that one ought to be so submissive that he does not feel in his self even the slightest heaviness for the execution of such commandments; on the contrary, because it is from Allah, he .embraces it willingly and eagerly

Since the seductive enemies or the ignorant friends thought that with the change of the Qiblah our services would become futile and our reward be wasted, at the end of :the verse it says

Allah would never let your Faith be wasted truly Allah is to mankind Most..." ".Affectionate, Most Merciful

Allah's commandments are issued as prescriptions for the purpose of our remedy; then one day this one is useful and the next, something else. Each of them in its proper place is the best to provide our felicity, prosperity, and development. Thus, the change of the Qiblah should not create any anxiety for you about your former prayers and worshippings nor those in the future, because all of them have been right and .proper

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p:۳۲۶

۱۴۴ قَدْ نَرى تَقَلُّبَ وَجْهِـکَ فِی السَّماءِ فَلَنُوَلِّیَنَّکَ قِبْلَهً تَرْضـبها فَوَلِّ وَجْهَکَ شَـطْرَ الْمَسْـجِدِ الْحَرام وَ حَیْـثُ ما کُنْتُـمْ فَوَلُّـوا
وُجُوهَکُـمْ شَطْـرَهُ وَ اِنَّ الَّذینَ اُوتُوا الْکِتابَ لَیَعْلَمُونَ اَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَ مَا اللّهُ بِغافِلٍ عَمّا یَعْمَلُونَ

Indeed We see turning your face (O' Muhammad) to the heavens, and now We " .۱۴۴
.shall turn you (in prayer) to a Qiblah that you shall be pleased with

Turn then your face towards the Sacred Mosque and wherever you are, turn your faces towards it (for prayer) and those who have been given the (earlier) Book know .well that it is the truth from their Lord

".And Allah is not at all heedless of what they do

Commentary : Verse ۱۴۴

Turn Towards the Sacred Mosque

As it was mentioned before, Jerusalem was the first, but temporary, Qiblah of the Muslims. So, as the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) was waiting to receive the command from Allah to change the Qiblah, especially after he had migrated to Medina and continued praying towards the same direction, i.e. towards the direction of Jerusalem, the Jews used to very frequently taunt the Muslims at not having a Qiblah of their own and stated that but for the Jews' faith, the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) would not even know the direction towards which, by the direction of Allah, he should turn in prayer. Owing to the sneers of the Jews he (p.b.u.h.) desired a change and Allah granted it to him. In the above verse this subject is referred to when the command of the Qiblah has been :issued to the Prophet (p.b.u.h.). It says thus

"... ,Indeed We see turning your face (O' Muhammad) to the heavens "

"... .and now We shall turn you (in prayer) to a Qiblah that you shall be pleased with ..."

"...Turn then your face towards the Sacred Mosque ..."

"...(and wherever you are, turn your faces towards it (for prayer ..."

According to the Islamic traditions, we know that this change of the Qiblah happened in Medina, at a very sensitive moment when the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) was praying the noontime prayer. The bringer of Divine revelation took Muhammad's (p.b.u.h.) arm and turned him from the direction of Jerusalem to the direction of the Ka`bah. At the same time Muslims immediately changed their rows, too. It is also said that in that event even the women had to change their place of prayer with the men. (It should be noted that in that occurrence Jerusalem was located approximately towards the (.North while the direction of the Ka`bah was towards the South

It is also noteworthy that the change of the Qiblah had been one of the signs of the Call of the Prophet of Islam (p.b.u.h.) written in the former scriptures. The Jews had .learnt therein that he (p.b.u.h.) would pray towards two directions for his Qiblah

:Therefore, in the above verse, after the command of the Qiblah, it adds

and those who have been given the (earlier) Book know well that it is the truth from ..." "... .their Lord

The phrase " those who have been given the (earlier) book " means the Jews who through the prophecies in their scriptures (Vide Deut ١٨: ١٥ and ١٨) already knew that :the holy Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) was a true prophet, thus

The Lord, thy God, will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy " .brethren like unto Me; unto him you shall hearken:" Deut ١٨: ١٥

I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put " My words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him." Deut ١٨: ١٨,١٩

Moreover, the Prophet of Islam (p.b.u.h.) did not follow the customs of his locale at first, and put aside the Ka`bah which was the center of idols that the Arabs loved very much. He formally accepted

the direction of the Qiblah of a limited minority, i.e. Jerusalem. This was, in itself, .considered proof of the rightfulness of his invitation and the Divinity of his Call

:At the end of the verse, it adds

".And Allah is not at all heedless of what they do …"

That is, instead of introducing the change of the Qiblah as a sign of his rightfulness, they rejected it and raised a tumult. But Allah is heedless neither of their actions nor of .their intentions

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۱۴۵ وَ لَئِ-نْ اَتَیْ-تَ الَّذی-نَ اُوتُ-وا الْکِتـابَ بِـکُ-لِّ ایَ-هٍ مـا تَبِعُ-وا قِبْلَتَ-کَ وَ ما اَنْتَ بِتابِعٍ قِبْلَتَهُ-مْ وَ ما بَعْضُهُ-مْ بِتابِ-عٍ
قِبْلَهَ بَعْضٍ وَ لَئِنِ اتَّبَعْتَ اَهْواءَهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ ما جاءَکَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ اِنَّ-کَ اِذًا لَمِ-نَ الظّالِمی-نَ

۱۴۵. " And even if you were to bring every Sign to those who have been given the (earlier) Book, they would not follow your Qiblah, nor would you be a follower of their Qiblah, neither are they the followers of each other's Qiblah.

And if you follow their desires after the knowledge that has come to you, then you will surely be of the Unjust."

Commentary :Verse ۱۴۵

! They will Never be Content

Commenting on the previous verse it was described that the ` People of the Book ' knew that the change of the Qiblah from the direction of Jerusalem to the direction of the Sacred Mosque not only was not an objection to the authenticity of the Prophet of Islam (p.b.u.h.), but that it was one of the signs of his rightfulness to prophethood, because they had learned through their religious books that the Apostle of Islam (p.b.u.h.) would pray towards the directions of two Qiblahs. But their vain religious fanaticisms did not let them accept the fact.

In principle, until when a person has not made a decision on a subject yet, by bringing proof, reasons, logic, and miracles for him, he might be made to understand the fact or the fact, itself, might be proved and be manifested to him and consequently, he changes his belief. But, when formerly he has decidedly confirmed his position, especially in the case of a zealous or ignorant person, it is not at all possible to change his mind.

:So the Qur'ān decisively says

And even if you were to bring every Sign to those who have been given the (earlier) "
"... ,Book, they would not follow your Qiblah

Therefore, do not tire yourself, for they will never surrender to the truth because the .truth-seeking soul has died in them

Unfortunately, all of the Divine prophets were faced with such persons who were either of the rich puissant ones, or of the deluded and mammonish scholars, or of the .ignorant zealous laymen

: Then, it adds

"... ,nor would you be a follower of their Qiblah ..."

That is, if they think that, with their sayings and uproars, the Muslims' Qiblah may change again, they are mistaken. This Qiblah is permanent and it is the final .everlasting Qiblah for all Muslims

This kind of speaking is, in fact, one of the ways of concluding the reproaches of opponents by standing firm and proving that those futile uproars will not change .anything

:Then it adds that they are so fanatic in their creed that

"... .neither are they the followers of each other's Qiblah ..."

Neither would the Jews follow the Christian's Qiblah nor would the Christians follow .the Jews' Qiblah

:(.Then, again for more emphasis, it warns the Prophet (p.b.u.h

And if you follow their desires after the knowledge that has come to you, then you ..."
".will surely be of the Unjust

Such warnings which are stated in the form of conditional sentenes, addressing the

:Prophet (p.b.u.h.) are frequently seen in the Qur'ān, the purpose of which is threefold

The first is that all know that, regarding the law of Allah, there is no difference between the servants of Allah and even the Divine prophets are included under those laws, therefore, if, for the sake of argument, the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.), too, were to delude from the Truth, he would also be involved with the Lord's punishment, though such a supposition is impossible concerning the prophets (a.s.) with their Faith and .immence knowledge and whose ranks of virtue are known

And, as it was stated before, a conditional proposition does not necessarily verify the) (.existence of a protasis

p:۳۳۱

The second thing is that, taking into consideration the above circumstance, other people would think about their own situations and know that when the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) is being warned, then how much more they should be careful about their responsibilities and duties. They must never follow their enemies' perverted desires .or give attention to their uproars

The third aim is to make it clear that the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.), too, has no right on his own to change anything in Allah's ordinances. It is not so that any one can collide or .come to terms with him, since he is a servant, too, and obedient to His Command

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۱۴۶ اَلَّذینَ اتَیْنا هُمُ الْکِتابَ یَعْرِفُونَهُ کَما یَعْرِفُونَ اَبْناءَهُمْ وَ اِنَّ فَریقًا مِنْهُمْ لَیَکْتُمُونَ الْحَقَّ وَ هُمْ یَعْلَمُونَ

۱۴۷ اَلْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّکَ فَلا تَکُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُمْتَرینَ

۱۴۶. " Those to whom We have given the (earlier) Book, recognize him (the Prophet) as they recognize their sons, but a group of them most surely conceal the truth while they know (it)."

۱۴۷. " The Truth is from your Lord, therefore be not one of the doubters."

Commentary : Verses ۱۴۶-۱۴۷

Point

Following the former discussions about the obstinacy and bigotry of a party of the People of the Book, the first verse of the above says:

" Those to whom We have given the (earlier) Book, recognize him (the Prophet) as they recognize their sons, ..."

Characteristics of Prophet Mohammad (p.b.u.h) Contained in (Earlier) Book

They have learnt about his name and his specific characteristics in their religious books.

"... but a group of them most surely conceal the truth while they know (it)."

Some of them, of course, having seen those clear signs of the promised Prophet (p.b.u.h.) embraced Islam. It is quoted from `Abdillah-ibn-Salām, who previously had been one of the Jewish scholars and then accepted Islam, that he said that from before, he knew the Prophet of Islam (p.b.u.h.) better than he knew his son, (۱) and the other scholars knew the Prophet of Islam well, too.

This verse uncovers an important fact. It denotes that the earlier Divine Books had contained a very vivid and distinct illustration of the physical and spiritual characteristics of the Prophet of Islam (p.b.u.h.). It had been so clear that those who were acquainted with those Books could draw a clear image of him in their minds.

Can anybody imagine that any name or description about the

۱- Al-Manar, vol. ۲ and Al-Tafsir-ul-Kabir, Fakhr-i-Razi, vol. ۴, p.۱۲۸

Prophet of Islam's (p.b.u.h.) characteristics could not be found mentioned in the Turah and the Evangel? Certainly not, because, as the above verse indicates, the Prophet of Islam (p.b.u.h.) was announced openly and very clearly before their eyes by his epithets that were cited in the books of the ` People of the Book '. If this statement ?were not true, might the scholars of the ` People of the Book ' not rise against it

Would they not present their books to him and insist that he should prove his claim thereby according to their Books? Was it possible that even one of their learned men would surrender to the invitation of the Prophet of Islam (p.b.u.h.) without sufficient ? cause

Thus, such verses in the Holy Qur'ān are, themselves, clear evidence for them to the (.rightfulness of the prophethood of the Prophet of Islam (p.b.u.h

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Then, to emphasize upon the former statements about the change of the Qiblah or :the ordinances of Islam in general, it says

".The Truth is from your Lord, therefore be not one of the doubters "

The announcement to the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) that he, in fact, is the Apostle from Allah sounds to some as a consolation to the holy Prophet himself (p.b.u.h.) so that he would never doubt when the enemies sneered or scorned upon either the change of the Qiblah or about other problems, even if all of them allied with each other against him. As it was mentioned before, any warning or threat addressed to the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) is always and invariably meant, not for the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.), but for his followers. He never doubted in the Divine revelation because the revelation was, for .' him, on the level of ` certainty of sight

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۱۴۸ وَ لِکُلٍّ وِجْهَةٌ هُوَ مُوَلّیها فَاسْتَبِقُوا الْخَیْراتِ اَیْنَ ما تَکُونُوا یَأْتِ بِکُمُ اللّهُ جَمیعاً اِنَّ اللّهَ عَلی کُلِّ شَیْءٍ قَدیرٌ

.۱۴۸ "Everyone has a direction to which he turns, so hasten to precede each other towards all that is good.

Wherever you (may) be, Allah will bring you altogether (unto Him); surely Allah is All-Powerful over all things."

Commentary : Verse ۱۴۸

Every Religion has a Qiblah

This verse is, in fact, an answer to the Jews who made a vast uproar about the event of the change of Qiblah. It says:

"Everyone has a direction to which he turns, ..."

There had been different directions of the Qiblah during the history of prophets. The change of the direction of a Qiblah is not a strange thing, because it is not like the principles of the religion which are permanent, nor is it similar to Divine affairs which are impossible to interfere in. Therefore, do not make such a big deal about the Qiblah.

"... so hasten to precede each other towards all that is good. ..."

Instead of spending all your time on talking about this minor subject, you had better pay attention to doing good deeds and having pure intentions which have a broad racing field where you can challenge to precede each other, because the criterion of the value of your existence is your pure good actions.

This meaning is just like what is stated in verse ۱۷۷ of the current Sura: " It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards the East and the West, but righteousness is that one should have faith in Allah, the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the Apostles, ..."

If you want to examine Islam or Muslims, you can utilize this criterion for analysis, not

.the problem of the change of the Qiblah

p:۳۳۵

:Then, as warning to the objectors and encouraging the good-doers, it says

"... ;(Wherever you (may) be, Allah will bring you altogether (unto Him ..."

.in the Great Court of the Hereafter which is the final stage of reward and punishment

It is not such that some be busy doing righteous works and some others do not do anything but destruction and spend their time spoiling others' deeds and, yet, these .two groups be treated equally without having any reckoning or any recompense

The idea may seem surprising for some people that how it is possible that Allah gathers the particles of the scattered dusts of men wherever they may be, and brings :them into a new life, then, it immediately says

".surely Allah is All-Powerful over all things ..."

Indeed, the existence of this statement at the end of the verse is evidence for the :statement preceding it, which says

." (Wherever you (may) be, Allah will bring you altogether (unto Him "

: Explanation

The Day When Imam Mahdi's (a.s.) Adherents Assemble

According to numerous traditions narrated from the holy Ahlul-Bait (a.s.) cited in Islamic literature, the expression: " Wherever you (may) be, Allah will bring you altogether (unto Him) " has been rendered into the adherents of Imam al-Mahdi, the .(.twelveth Imam, (a.s

It is quoted in ` Raudat-ul-Kāfī ' from Imam Muhammad Bāqir (a.s.) who, after mentioning this expression, said: " It means the adherents of Imam Ghā'im (a.s.) who consist of three hundred and thirteen men. By Allah, they are the objective meaning ./ of the phrase / ummat-ul-ma`dūdah

By Allah, they all will gather together at the same time like the autumnal wind-driven (broken clouds that become cumulus."(١

Raudat-ul-Kāfī, vol. ۸, p. ۳۱۳, Tradition ۴۷۸ ۱ -۱

It is also narrated from Ali-ibn-Mūsa-ar-Ridā, the eighth Imam, who has said: " By Allah, when al-Mahdi (a.s.) rises, Allah will gather all our followers from all cities unto him."(١)

There is no doubt that this commentary is one of the deep innate meanings of the verse. Based on Islamic traditions, we know that there are layers upon layers of meaning concerning the verses of the Qur'ān.

One of them is the apparent meaning which is universal and general; and others, which are the deeply hidden ones which none knows except the Prophet (p.b.u.h.), the sinless Imams (a.s.), and those whom Allah wills.

In other words, these traditions refer to this very meaning that the Creator, Who is able to gather the particles of the scattered dusts of men from different parts of the world, can easily bring the adherents of al-Mahdi (a.s.) on one day and at one time together to strike the first spark of the establishment of the revolution for the settlement of the godly government in order to put an end to tyranny and transgression, and establish Divine Justice among people throughout the world.

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١- Majm-ul-Bayan, vol. ١, p.٢٣١ ١

۱۴۹ وَ مِنْ حَيْثُ خَرَجْتَ فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ شَطْ-رَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرامِ وَ إِنَّهُ لَلْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ وَ مَا اللّهُ بِغافِلٍ عَمّا تَعْمَلُونَ

۱۵۰ وَ مِنْ حَيْثُ خَرَجْتَ فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ شَطْ-رَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرامِ وَ حَيْثُ ما كُنْتُمْ فَوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ شَطْرَهُ لِئَلاّ يَكُونَ لِلنّاسِ عَلَيْكُمْ
حُجَّةٌ اِلَّا الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُ-وا مِنْهُ-مْ فَلا تَخْشَوْهُمْ وَ اخْشَوْنِى وَلِأُتِمَّ نِعْمَتِى عَلَيْكُمْ وَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ

۱۴۹. " And from whatever place you come forth, turn your face towards the Sacred Mosque. Indeed, this is the truth from your Lord. And Allah is not at all heedless of what you do."

۱۵۰. " And from whatever place you come forth, turn your face (in prayer) towards the Sacred Mosque; and wherever you are,

turn your faces towards it, so that people shall have no dispute against you, save those of them that are unjust. Have no awe of them, but stand in awe of Me; and that I may perfect My blessing upon you, and so that you might be guided (aright)."

Commentary : Verses ۱۴۹-۱۵۰

Turn Your Face Towards the Ka'bah

In the previous verse where the direction of the Sacred Mosque is referred to, it concerns Medina, the city where most Muslims inhabited at that time. But, in the first of the above verses, the meaning is more general and it says that from wherever you come forth and set out for travelling, turn your face towards the Ka`bah in prayer.

" And from whatever place you come forth, turn your face towards the Sacred Mosque. ..."

Some Points and Messages

Point

:Here are some points and messages that can be noted

Fulfilment of Prophecy.١

In numerous verses of the Qur'ān, the subject of the Qiblah and turning towards it is .١ repeated and emphasized. These repetitions are not undue. Through every one of these verses, besides the proposition of the Qiblah, a new point is propounded. In the current Sura,(١) after commissioning the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) and the Muslims to turn their faces towards the Qiblah, the Sacred Mosque, it says: " ...and those who have been given the (earlier) Book know well that it is the truth from their Lord...", because they had learnt from their religious books that the Prophet of Islam (p.b.u.h.) would ,pray towards two Qiblahs, so

,"We shall turn you (in prayer) to a Qiblah that you shall be pleased with..."

in order to fulfil the prophecy which was given to the ` People of the Book ' cited in .their Book which they were expecting

Here, the subject is emphasized again, thus: "...Indeed, this is the truth from your "... .Lord

In the next verse, there is another reason mentioned for these reiterations which will .be referred to in the following

Reiterated to be renewed and settled in the minds and hearts of people.٢

Whenever a new subject is proposed, the matter should necessarily be reiterated .٢ to be renewed and settled in the minds and hearts of people. It is narrated in a tradition that the first phrase in the prayer call (i.e. Allāhu-Akbar) is repeated four times in order that people be prepared and receptive, but the phrases following that are repeated only two times, because people's attention has already been attracted .by the proclamation of the call to prayer

:The Lord warns those who disobey His Command, saying

".And Allah is not at all heedless of what you do..."

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In the second of the above verses, too, immediately after the ordinance of turning the face towards the Sacred Mosque, the Lord says:

"...so that people shall have no dispute against you..."

As it was formerly pointed out, the ` People of the Book ' knew that the Prophet of Islam (p.b.u.h.) would pray towards two Qiblahs, so,

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Sura Al-Baqarah, No ۲, verse ۱۴۴ ۱ -۱

if that had not come to pass, they would have questioned or objected that the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) lacked the qualities mentioned in the earlier heavenly Books, or they would have sneered and despised the Muslims accusing them that they, who had not an independent Qiblah for their own, were the followers of the Jewish Qiblah. This objection was not, of course, only from the side of the Jews, but the pagans also assisted them in their ridicules, criticizing : ` Why does not Muhammad respect the Ka`bah, the Holy House built by Abraham and Ismail (a.s.), exclusively for the prayer to God and does yeild towards the religious centre of the Jews? ' The hypocrites, too, were busy objecting to the change of the Qiblah. They said that the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) .was not firm in his decision

However, this verse, with emphasis and repetition, prepares the Muslims for acceptance and perseverance. It informs them that those people who accept proof and reasons will not object to you, but those who are wrong doers and unjustly conceal the truth will not stop seeking pretexts. "...so that people shall have no dispute "... .against you, save those of them that are unjust

Therefore, you should neither give heed to them nor be afraid of them. You should .fear only Allah

"... ;Have no awe of them, but stand in awe of Me..."

Another point which is noteworthy, here, is that the Qiblah is the symbol of Monotheism. The Qiblah, the direction of prayer, is the emblem of the Muslims. In Nahjul-Balaqah, Sermon ١٧٣, the Qiblah is referred to as ` a clear sign, or a distinguishing flag '. Idol worshippers and star worshippers, when worshipping, turned towards idols or stars or the moon. Instead of those misguided directions, Islam introduced the Ka`bah as the Qiblah for Muslims. Thus turning towards the Sacred Mosque is considered a sign of being mindful of the Lord. Some traditions indicate that the Prophet of Islam (p.b.u.h.) usually sat towards the direction of the Qiblah. We are even advised by the Holy Ahlul-Bait (a.s.) to lie, to sleep and to sit down towards that direction. This action has been counted as a form of worship. There are some special obligatory ordinances on observing the Qiblah while performing certain ritual actions.

For instance, slaughtering animals to be used for food, burial of a Muslim corpse in the grave, and establishing the

obligatory prayers should be done towards the Qiblah. Elimination of bodily wastes .while facing or with one's back to the Qiblah is unlawful

In addition to what was said in the above, the Qiblah is the sign and the factor of uniting Muslims. If we look from above the earth down at the Muslims of the world, we see that they turn towards the Qiblah at least five times a day with special regularity and in a particular order. Throughout history, the Ka`bah has been the center point of the godly movements and revolutions, including that of Abraham (a.s.), Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.), up to Imam Husayn's (a.s.); and in the future, Imam Mahdi (May Allah hasten his advent) will start his blessed movement from the site of the Ka`bah. :Then, we conclude that

The Ka`bah is the Qiblah of Muslims, all of whom, wherever .۱

Conclusions

.they be, are commissioned to turn towards it when they stand praying

And from whatever place you come forth, turn your face towards the Sacred " .Mosque. Indeed, this is the truth from your Lord

".And Allah is not at all heedless of what you do

.Muslims should avoid doing anything that causes their enemies to seek pretext .۲

"...so that people shall have no dispute against you..."

.Independence is a ` value ' while tolerating flattery is a disgrace .۳

The change of the Qiblah is the fulfilment of the conditions and qualities promised in .۴ .the earlier Divine Books

The change of the Qiblah was a factor to nullify the vain objections and pretexts of .۵ .the ` People of the Book ', pagans, and hypocrites

:It is not right to be silent when there is injustice .۶

"... .save those of them that are unjust..."

Foreign enemies cannot be the greatest danger for the Muslims, while impiety and .۷ .having no awe of Allah is the real danger

Appointing an independent Qiblah for the Muslims was to prepare the perfection of .۸ .Allah's blessing upon them

"... ,and that I may perfect my blessing upon you..."

"... .(and so that you might be guided (aright..."

Appointing an independent Qiblah for Muslims' prayers towards the Sacred Mosque .۹ .is a process for the guidance of believers

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۱۵۱ کَما اَرْسَلْنا فیکَمْ رَسُولاً مِنْکَمْ یَتْلُوا عَلَیْکَمْ ایاتِنا وَ یُزَکّیکَمْ وَ یُعَلِّمُکَمُ الْکِتابَ وَ الْحِکْمَهَ وَ یُعَلِّمُکَمْ مالَمْ تَکَونُوا تَعْلَمُونَ

۱۵۲ فَاذْکُرُونی اَذْکُرْکُمْ وَاشْکُرُوا لی وَلا تَکْفُرُونِ

.۱۵۱ " Even as We have sent among you a Messenger of your own who recites Our revelations to you that purifies you and teaches you the Book and the Wisdom, and teaches you that which you did not know."

.۱۵۲ " Therefore, remember Me, and I will remember you; and be thankful to Me, and be you not ungrateful."

Commentary : Verses ۱۵۱-۱۵۲

Messengership of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.)

The subject matter of the first verse is the Messengership of the Prophet of Islam (p.b.u.h.) which was in answer to the invocation of Abraham (a.s.) who had asked: " Our Lord, send amongst them an Apostle of their own who shall recite unto them Your revelations, ...", (Sura Al-Baqarah, No. ۲, verse ۱۲۹). Besides, that the Prophet of Islam (p.b.u.h.) also repeatedly said: " I am (the fruit of) the very acceptance of my father's (invocation, Abraham (a.s.)."(۱)

Thus, Allah sent a prophet to the people from among themselves who was familiar with their demands, needs, and wishes. He used to communicate with them through their own language, and he lived amongst them.

" Even as We have sent among you a Messenger of your own who recites Our revelations to you that purifies you and teaches you the Book and the Wisdom, and teaches you that which you did not know."

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۱- ۱ Al-Amali, by Shaykh Tusi, p. ۳۷۹

Rank of Man Promoted

Through the second verse, Allah has promoted the rank of Man by saying that He and .we remember each other

"... ,Therefore, remember Me, and I will remember you "

The level and standard of knowledge and understanding of people is diffirent, so, Allah tells a group of servants : "...Remember Allah's favour on you...", (Sura `Āl-il-`Imrān, No. ٣, verse ١٠٣), while he addresses some others of them thus: "... remember Me...", as in the current verse. The remembrance of Allah is a prerequisite to being thankful to Him, hence, it has preceded the term thankfulness. This is an illustration of the consideration of Allah's honour for Man as a reflection of His Grace unto His servants. On one end of this scale, there is Man with his ignorance, poverty, mortality, and feebleness, while on the other end, there is Allah, the All-Knowing, the All-Sufficient, the Eternal, and the All-Mighty Who wants him to remember Him in order to show his gratitude for the great blessings of the Qiblah and the Messenger of Islam, and He promises to remember him, too. This very remembrance is also a .favour from Allah bestowed upon His servants

No doubt, if a person neglects Allah in life, He, of course, will be heedless towards him, .too

".and be thankful to Me, and be you not ungrateful ..."

: Explanation

Descriptions and messages derived from the above verses

Here, your attention is attracted to the following descriptions and messages derived :from the above verses

The recitation of Divine revelations, the purification of receptive souls, the . ١ instruction of the Book and Wisdom, and teaching of people what they do not know, .are among the duties of prophets

That leader is successful who is from amongst the people themselves, because he .۲ is acquainted with their problems and speaks the same language as theirs.

"...a Messenger of your own who recites Our revelation to you..."

Human beings are not able to solve all their scientific problems by themselves. That .۳ is why He did not say in the verse / mālāta`lamūn / `(He teaches you) what you do not know ', but He said: / mālamtakūnū

p:۳۴۳

ta`lamūn / `(He teaches you) that which you did not know ' in order to remind us that if the prophets (a.s.) had not existed, Man could never have found the answers to many of his problems. For example, he could not have found out what his future (the next world) will be, or, he could not recognize which path was the true path of felicity .and salvation

Prophets were not merely the teachers and leaders of ethics and theology, but they .۴ were also the instructors of science. Without their leadership in science, human .knowledge would have remained undeveloped in all fields

".and teaches you that which you did not know..."

The remembrance of Allah is not only the cause for the Grace of Allah, but with the .۵ remembrance of Allah the hearts will gain peace and rest. Sura Al-Ra`d, No. ۱۹, verse :۲۸ says

".Certainly! By Allah's remembrance are the hearts at rest..."

Establishing prayer is the best way to remember Allah, as in Sura Tāhā, No. ۲۰, verse .۶ :۱۴, Allah Himself says

"...keep up prayer for My remembrance..."

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۱۵۳ يا اَيُّهَا الَّذينَ امَنُوا اسْتَعينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَ الصَّلوهِ اِنَّ اللّهَ مَعَ الصّ-ابِرينَ

O' you who have Faith! seek you help (from Allah) through patience and prayer, " .۱۵۳ ".(verily Allah is with the patient ones (in the time of adversity

Commentary : Verse ۱۵۳

Point

The phrase / yā'ayyuhalla…īna'āmanū / " O' you who have Faith! " addresses all those who have Faith entirely, foremost of whom Hadrat Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (a.s.) and the rest of the immaculate Imams are distinguished. This idea is expressed in many Islamic narrations; for instance, it is quoted from Ibn Abbas narrating from the holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) who said: " No revelation containing ` O' you who have faith ' was (sent down except that Ali is at its top and is its chief."(۱

Again, it is narrated from `Akramah who narrates from Ibn-Abbas that has said: " Allah has sent down no verse in the Qur'ān consisting of `O' you who have faith ' but (Ali-ibn-Abītālib (a.s.) is the leader of it and the chief of it ".(۲

Of course, the more complete and the higher the degree of Faith is, the content of the verse about it is more clear and more apparent. (This phrase has also been discussed more comprehensively when commenting on Sura No, ۲ verse ۱۰۴ on pages ۲۵۰ and (.۲۵۱ in the current volume

The phrase / wasta`īnū / " seek you help from Allah " is a guiding imperative phrase because at every moment and in all affairs a mortal is in need of Allah's help, whether it is something which is inside his free will, because he is not an absolutely independent subject, though he is created free in will; or it is something which is outside of his will. Man is in complete need of Him (s.w.t.) and he should constantly invocate for

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Tafsir-i-Furat-ul-Kufi, p. ۴۹, Tradition ۷ ۱ -۱

Al-Burhan fi Tafsir-il-Quran, vol. ۱, p. ۱۶۷ ۲ -۲

.everything and seek help from the Lord

A person most naturally and reasonably can be qualified for the special blessings from God. If this verse is to be taken as referring to the conquest of Mecca, even then it holds good, if it means to say that the people must prove their worthiness or value to the Truth in Islam by bearing the hardest trials with constant prayers to the Lord; for prayer suggests the praying individual's acknowledgment of God's Omnipotence and the individual's confidence in God being the All-Merciful one, as the only One who can .grant the prayers of the sincere supplicants

Aid of Allah Requires Eligibility

Point

Real Faith can never be mere empty words. It must express or manifest itself through patience or endurance in all that befalls the individual to show his faithfulness to God, .and the help from God must be sought through prayers or supplications to the Lord

:The aid of Allah requires eligibility. This eligibility is confirmed by two things

Patience

The first is having patience in worldly hardships and perseverance in bearing its bitter circumstances. And also having patience in tolerating the hardship of performing Divine services, and obtaining knowledge and good ethics, patience in withholding one's self from lusts and the fleeting pleasure of committing sins and yeilding to low desires, is necessary. This bitterness of hardship, which is short in time, finally results in a sweet fruit which lasts a long time. Concerning the epithets of the true believers, Amir-ul-Mu'mineen Ali (a.s.) has said: " The short period of patience resulted in a long (period of tranquility for them."(١

.' The term / ṣabr / ` patience ', in this verse, is rendered into ` fasting ' and ` holy war

The second thing is ` prayer ' which is the highest means of turning towards and approaching Allah by which we may seek help and aid from that Origin of favour and

.Grace

Some commentators have rendered the term / ṣalāt / into ` supplication ' whose .explanation demands a separate chapter

Some others, based on some Islamic traditions, have interpreted it into the ` obligatory prayers ' and ` supererogatory prayers' . For

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Bihar-ul-Anwār, vol. ۶۸, p. ۱۱۳, Tradition ۴۸ ۱ -۱

example: it is cited in Tafsīr `Ayyashī narrated from Fudayl from Imam Bāqir (a.s.) who said: " O' Fudayl, convey our salam (regards) to our followers whom you visit and tell them I say that I avail you aught (in keeping you far) from the punishment of Allah save by piety. Then, they must control their tongues and be careful of their hands. They should be attentive to patience and prayer. Verily Allah is with the patient ones."(١)

The first part of the verse has also occurred in verse ۴۵, the explanation of which can be referred to on pages ۱۶۹ and ۱۷۰.

The objective meaning of the phrase " Allah is with the patient ones" is that His help, assistance, guidance, success, favours, the protection from pests, the perfection of intentions, as well as His other blessings are showered upon the patient by Him.

Above all of the aforementioned bounties, there is the reward of Allah granted to the patient believers in the Hereafter about whom He says: " Those who patiently persevere will truly receive a reward without measure! ", (Sura Az-Zumar, No. ۳۹, verse ۱۳).

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۱- Bihar-ul-Anwār, vol. ۸۲, p. ۲۳۲ ۱

۱۵۴ وَ لا تَقُولُوا لِمَنْ یُقْتَلُ فی سَبیلِ اللّهِ اَمْواتٌ بَلْ اَحْی-اءٌ وَ ل-کِنْ لا تَشْعُرُونَ

:And do not say of those who are slain in Allah's way " .۱۵۴

".They are dead.' Nay (they are) alive, but you perceive (it) not `

Commentary : Verse ۱۵۴

The Qur'ānic phrase ` of those who are slain in Allah's way ' refers to those who are slain (i.e. martyred) in the battles led by the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) or Imams (a.s.) or one of their specific deputies, as well as anyone who is martyred on the path of Islam and propagation of the religion of Allah. The content of the verse is inclusive of not only all who are slain in the path of Allah such as: the immaculate Imams (a.s.) their ministers, Muslim scholars and believers, although the occasion of revelation of the verse is reported that it was revealed about the Muslims who were martyred in the battle of .Badr, but also any one other than them

:And do not say of those who are slain in Allah's way "

"...'.They are dead `

The phenomenon of martyrdom is more clearly described in Sura 'Āli-`Imrān, No. ۳, verses ۱۶۹,۱۷۰ which gives further information about the truth that those who surrender or sacrifice their lives in the way of Allah (i.e. the martyrs) are alive .receiving their sustenance from their Lord

And reckon not those who are killed in Allah's way as dead; nay they are alive (and) " are provided sustenance from their Lord;" " Rejoicing in what Allah has given them "... ,out of His grace

The term /šahīd/ ` martyred ' used in many occurrences in the Qur'ān refers to this .blissful state of realization

Therefore, this stage of life, i.e. the life immediately after death, i.e. the purgatory life, is not allocated to martyrs alone, though the verse is about them, but it envelops all people, because stating something does

.not mean that the unstated, but applicable, instances are not involved

For example, when we say ` this man is just ', it does not mean that justice belongs to him exclusively and there is not any other just person; while there may be thousands .of people who are just

Purgatorial life for all

Thus, this verse, here, confirms the purgatorial life for the martyrs. This life, the intermediate state, according to many verses of the Qur'ān and abundant Islamic traditions, exists for all believers and nonbelievers both, with a distinction. The soul of a believer, after departuring from its physical body, will settle in a body similar to this one and will be sustained in that world until when the Hereafter comes forth; while the soul of a nonbeliever, during the time when passing this course, will be in torment, as the Qur'ān says: " (In falsehood will they be) until when death comes to one of them, he says: ` O' my Lord! send me back (to life), " " In order that I may work righteousness in the things I neglected. ' By no means! It is but a word he says, Before them is a partition till the Day they are raised up." (Sura Al-Mu'min, No. ٢٣, verses ٩٩ .(and ١٠٠

Martyrdom

It is narrated from Yūnus-ibn-Thibyān who said he was sitting with Imam Ṣādiq (a.s.) when he was explaining about the believers' souls and he (a.s.) said: " O' Yūnus! when Allah gets the soul of a believer taken, He puts his soul in a setting like his body that was in this world. So, they eat and drink and when a comer enters he recognizes them (in the same form as they were in the world."(١

Also, Abū-Baṣīr narrates from Imam Ṣādiq (a.s.) who, about the believers' souls, said: " (They will be) in Heaven with the same features as their (worldly) bodies were so (that if you see him (one of them) you will surely recognize him and say who he is."(٢

:Then the Qur'ān continues saying

"... ,Nay, (they are) alive..."

Sorts of life

Life is divided into four sorts: the plant-life, the animal-life, the human-life, and the .Faith-life

Plant-life is the power of growth which is common among plants and animals including human beings. The death of this particular life is

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Majma`-ul-Bayān, vol. ۱, p. ۲۳۶ ۱ -۱

Ibid -۲

.when that power stops

Animal-life is the power by which feeling and conscious movement come to being. .Human beings and animals have this life in common. It dies when this power ceases

Human-life is the faculty of general reasoning and perceiving by which Man is distinguished from animal. This phenomenon emerges because of that abstract and .rational soul which administrates this body

Its death causes the interruption of this administration and breaking off its connection with the body but there is no destruction for it and it remains to return to the body again when the Resurrection occurs. So, this purgatorial state exists not only for .martyrs or Muslims, but for the soul of every conscious being

Faith-life is the peace of mind, assurance of self, and clearness of heart all of which come into existence for a believer through Faith and knowing Allah. It is in this state that he can live in rest and tranquility with joy and pleasure because the toils, hardships, and miseries of this world would not create any awe, worry, anxiety or .instability for him

This very condition originates from his relianace and belief in Providence, Who gives .only goodness

:This life is the same as the ` good life ', about which the Lord says

Whoever works righteousness, man or woman, and has Faith, verily, to him will We " give a new life, a life that is good and pure, and We will bestow on such their reward according to the best of their actions." (Sura An-Naḥl, No. ۱۶, verse ۹۷). And, the Qur'ān also says: " O' you who have Faith! give your response to Allah and His Apostle, when .(He calleth you to that which will give you life; ..." (Sura Al-Anfāl, No. ۸, verse ۲۴

It is said that the utterances in a language indicate meanings so that letter and spirit correspond with each other. For example, the term ` light or lamp ' is applied to any means which is used in darkness to get brightness from. Then, whatever has this function, the application of that term for it is correct, although the substance is

.different from the point of material, form and other qualities

Life is a general sense which is recognized by the appearance of the effects which are expected from it. In this sense, the term ` life ' is used for the Essence of Allah, too. The example of this idea is recited

p:۳۵۰

in Sura 'Āl-i-`Imran, No. ٣, verse ٢ which says: " Allah! there is no god but He, the Living, the Self-Subsisting, Eternal." That is, the Essence from Whom the effects of knowledge and power are clear and manifest.

Allah, the living

That is why some sholars said that Allah's life is His very Knowledge and Power. Of course, the Essence of the Knower and the Mighty is alive. Therefore, wherever the effects of this meaning exist, the application of this utterance is correct, but it is not necessary that its kind and its characteristics and properties, which are appropriate to those particular situations, be the same everywhere and in all circumstances. Hence, the life in Purgatory, from the point of quality for martyrs and other people, is of the quality of the same world. It is for this reason that the people of this world with their senses, the quality of the nature of which is of the quality of this world, can not perceive that which is of the quality of the nature of that world.

"...but you perceive (it) not."

By the way, this verse clears the doubt of materialist and pagans who believe that with death, man's life becomes extinct, i.e. there is no life after death. Here, the Qur'ān warns all, Muslim or non-Muslim, that

MAN'S LIFE DOES NOT PERISH AFTER DEATH, BUT IT DOES REMAIN.

So, with this in mind, we realize that there is nothing more valuable or worthwhile than the time spent striving for the perfection of such a life. May Allah help us all to follow His Ordinances that He so graciously made available to us by way of the Qur'ān in order that we might experience success in this life and in the Hereafter.

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بِسْمِ اللّهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحیم

یا اَیُّهَا النّاسُ قَدْ جاءَکُمْ بُرْهانٌ مِنْ رَبِّکُمْ وَ اَنْزَلْنا اِلَیْکُمْ نُوراً

مُبیناً (سوره نساء ۴ آیه ۴۷۱)

O' mankind! Verily there has come to you a convincing proof (the Messenger and the " Qur'ān) from your Lord: for We have sent unto

(you a light (that is) manifest." (Holy Qur'ān ۴: ۱۷۴

اِنّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّکْرَ وَ اِنّا لَهُ لَحافِظُونَ (سوره الحجر ۵۱ آیه ۹)

We have, without doubt, sent down the Message and We will assuredly Guard it " ((from corruption)." (Holy Qur'ān ۱۵: ۹

وَ مَنْ اَعْرَضَ عَنْ ذِکْری فَاِنَّ لَهُ مَعیشَةً ضَنْکا وَ نَحْشُرُهُ یَوْمَ

الْقِیمَهِ اَعْمی (سوره طه ۰۲ آیه ۴۲۱)

But whosoever turns away from My Message (the Qur'ān), verily for him is a " straitened toilsome life, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Judgement." ((Holy Qur'ān ۲۰: ۱۲۴

وَ نُنَزِّلُ مِنَ الْقُرانِ ما هُوَ شِفاءٌ وَ رَحْمَةٌ لِلْمُؤْمِنینَ (سوره اسراء ۷۱ آیه

۲۸)

And We send down (stage by stage) of the Qur'ān that which is a healing and a " (mercy to those who believe...", (Holy Qur'ān ۱۷: ۸۲

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

" يا اَيُّهَا الَّذينَ آمَنُوا اَطيعُوا اللّه وَ اَطيعُوا الرَّسُول وَ اُولِى الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ "قالَ اللّه تَعالى:

سوره النساء ۴-لآیه ۹۵

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

O you who have faith! Obey Allah, and obey the Apostle, and those charged with " (authority among you..." (Sura Nisa, No. ۴, Verse ۵۹

Those charged with authority' are only the twelve sinless Imams (a.s.) and, at the`) time of occultation, Sources of Imitation, who are learned, pious, and just, should be (.referred to

فِى اِكْمـلِ اِلـدّينِ فى حَـديثٍ عَنْ جابرِ الْجُعْفى عَنْ جابِرِبْنِ عَبْـدِاللّهِ الْاَنْص-ارىّ قالَ: قُلْتُ: يا رَسُولَ اللّهِ عَرَفْنا اللّهَ وَ رَسُولَهُ، فَمَنْ اُولُوالاَْـمْرِ الَّذينَ قَرَنَ اللّهُ طـاعَتَهُمْ بِطاعَتِـكَ؟ فَقالَ (صـلى الله عليه و آله) هُمْ خُلَفائى يا جابِرُ، وَ اَئِمَهُ الْمُسْـلِمينَ مِنْ بَعْـدى أَوَّلُهُمْ عَلىُ بْنُ اَبيطـالِبٍ، ثُمَّ الْحَسَنُ وَ الْحُسَـينُ، ثُمَّ عَلِيُّ بْنُ الْحُسَـيْنِ، ثُمَّ مُحَمِّدُ بْنُ عَلىٍّ الْمَعْرُوفُ فِى التَّوْراهِ بِالْباقِرِ، وسَـتُدْرِكُهُ يا جابِرُ، فَاِذا لَقَيْتَهُ فَأَقْرِئْهُ مِنّى السَّلامَ، ثُمَّ الصّادِقُ جَعْفَرُ بْنُ مُحَمَدٍ، ثُمَّ مُوسَـى بْنُ جَعْفَرٍ، ثُمَّ عَلِيُّ بْنُ مُوسى، ثُمَّ مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عَلِيٍّ، ثُمَّ عَلىُّ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ، ثُمَّ الْحَسَـنُ بْـنُ عَلىّ ـ، ثُمَّ سَـمِيّى وَ كَنِيّى حُجَّهُ عَلِيٍّ، ذاكَ الَّذى يَفْتَـحُ اللّهُ تَعـالى ذِكْرُهُ عَلَى اللّهِ فى أَرْضِهِ، وَ بَقِيَّتُهُ فى عِبادِهِ ابْنُ الْحَسنِ بِنِ يَدَيْهِ مَشارِقَ الْاَرْضِ وَ مَغارِبَه-ا

In ` Ikmāl-ud-Din ' a tradition, through ` Jābir-il-Ju`fī ', is narrated from ` Jābir-ibn-`Abdillāh ' thus: " I said: ` O Messenger of Allah,

we have known Allah and His Apostle; then who is ` Ulul-Amr ', those that Allah has made their obedience the same as your obedience? ' Then, the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said: ` O Jābir! they are, after me, my successors and the Guides of Muslims; the first of them is Ali-ibn-Abitalib; then (Imam) Hassan, and (Imam) Husain; then Ali-ibn-il-Husain; then Mohammad-ibn-Ali; known in the Turah as Bāqir, whom you will see. O Jābir! When you visit him, give my regards to him. After him, there is Sādiq, Ja`far-ibn-Muhammad; and after him Mūsa-ibn-Ja`far; then Ali-ibn-Mūsā; then Muḥammad-ibn-Ali; then Ali-ibn-Muhammad, then Hassan-ibn-Ali; and after him

(there comes) Al-Ghā'im whose name and sir-name is the same as mine. He is Allah's Authority on the Earth

and His Remainder amongst His servants. He is the son of (Imam) Hassan-ibn-Ali (al-`Askarī). This is the very personality by whose hands Allah will open the Easts and .Wests of the worlds

Ikmal-ud-Dīn, Vol. ١, p. ٢٥٣' with nearly similar meaning, in Yanābī-`ul-Mawaddah, p.) (١١٧

" اِنْ هُوَ اِلاّ وَحْیٌ یُوحی وَ ما یَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوی "قالَ اللّهُ تَعالی:

سوره النجم (٣۵) - لآیه ٣ و ۴

Nor does the Apostle speak out of desire. It is naught but revelation that is revealed " "

(Sura Najm, No. ۵٣, verses ٣,۴)

قالَ رَسولُ اللّه (صلی الله علیه و آله):

اِنّی تـارِکٌ فِیکُمْ الثَّقَلَیْنِ کِتـابَ اللّهِ وَ عِتْرَتی، کِتـابُ اللّهِ حَبْـلٌ مَمْـدُودٌ مِنَ السَّمـاءِ اِلَی الأَرْضِ وَ عِتْرَتی" أَهْلُ بَیْتی وَ اِنَّ اللّطیفَ الْخَبیرَ اَخْبَرَنی اَنَّهُمـا لَنْ یَفْتَرِقـا حَتّی یَرِدا عَلَیَّ الْحَوْضَ فَـانْظُرُوا بِمـاذا تَخْلُفُونی " لَنْ تَضِـلُّوا مـا اِنْ تَمَسَّکْتُمْ بِهِمـا" وَ فی حَـدیثٍ اخَر:"قالَ النَّبی (صلی الله علیه و آله):

The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said: " I leave behind me two weighty (very worthy and important) things: The Book of Allah (i.e. the Qur'ān), which is a stretched string from the heaven to the earth, and my progeny, my Ahlul-Bait; for verily Allah, The Merciful, The Aware, informed me that never, never, will these two get separated from each other until they meet me at the Houd of Kauthar (the Pond of Abundance). Therefore, be careful and contemplate on how you will treat them (after me) ". And, in another tradition it is added: " Never, never, shall you get astray if you attach yourselves to ".these TWO

Ma`ānī-ul-Akhbār, p. ٩٠, tradition ٢, and Musnad Aḥmad-ibn-Ḥanbal, Vol. ٣, p. ١٧, and) other books from the Sunnite School and Shi`ah School mentioned in Iḥqāq-ul-Haqq, (Vol. ٩, p. ٣٠٩ to ٣٧۵

:Abul-Hassan-ir-Ridā (a.s.) said

May the Mercy of Allah be upon the servant who Keeps alive our "

commandment." I asked him (a.s.) how the one could keep your

commandment alive. He (a.s.) said: " He (can) learn our sciences and

teach them to people. In fact, if people knew (the merits) and

".goodnesses of our speech, surely they would follow us

(Ma`ānī-ul-Akhbār, p. ۱۸۰ `Uyūn-i-Akhbār-ur-Ridā, V. ۱, p. ۲۰۷)

p:۳۹۴

About center

In the name of Allah

هَلْيَسْتَوِيالَّذِينَيَعْلَمُونَوَالَّذِينَلَايَعْلَمُونَ

?Are those who know equal to those who do not know

al-Zumar: ٩

:Introduction

Ghaemiyeh Computer Research Institute of Isfahan, from ٢٠٠٧, under the authority of Ayatollah Haj SayyedHasanFaqihImami (God blesses his soul), by sincere and daily efforts of university and seminary elites and sophisticated groups began its activities .in religious, cultural and scientific fields

:Manifesto

Ghaemiyeh Computer Research Institute of Isfahan in order to facilitate and accelerate the accessibility of researchers to the books and tools of research, in the field of Islamic science, and regarding the multiplicity and dispersion of active centers in this field

and numerous and inaccessible sources by a mere scientific intention and far from any kind of social, political, tribal and personal prejudices and currents, based on performing a project in the shape of (management of produced and published works from all Shia centers) tries to provide a rich and free collection of books and research papers for the experts, and helpful contents and discussions for the educated generation and all classes of people interested in reading, with various formats in the .cyberspace

:Our Goals are

(propagating the culture and teachings of Thaqalayn (Quran and Ahlulbayt p.b.u.t-

encouraging the populace particularly the youth in investigating the religious issues-

replacing useful contents with useless ones in the cellphones, tablets and computers-

providing services for seminary and university researchers-

spreading culture study in the publich-

paving the way for the publications and authors to digitize their works-

:Policies

acting according to the legal licenses-

relationship with similar centers-

avoiding parallel working-

merely presenting scientific contents-

mentioning the sources-

.It's obvious that all the responsibilities are due to the author

:Other activities of the institute

Publication of books, booklets and other editions-

Holding book reading competitions-

Producing virtual, three dimensional exhibitions, panoramas of religious and tourism-places

.Producing animations, computer games and etc-

Launching the website with this address: www.ghaemiyeh.com-

Fabricatingdramatic and speech works-

Launching the system of answering religious, ethical and doctrinal questions-

Designing systems of accounting, media and mobile, automatic and handy systems,-web kiosks

Holding virtual educational courses for the public-

Holding virtual teacher-training courses-

Producing thousands of research software in three languages (Persian, Arabic and-English) which can be performed in computers, tablets and cellphones and available and downloadable with eight international formats: JAVA, ANDROID, EPUB, CHM, PDF, HTML, CHM, GHB on the website

Also producing four markets named "Ghaemiyeh Book Market" with Android, IOS,-WINDOWS PHONE and WINDOWS editions

:Appreciation

We would appreciate the centers, institutes, publications, authors and all honorable .friends who contributed their help and data to us to reach the holy goal we follow

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